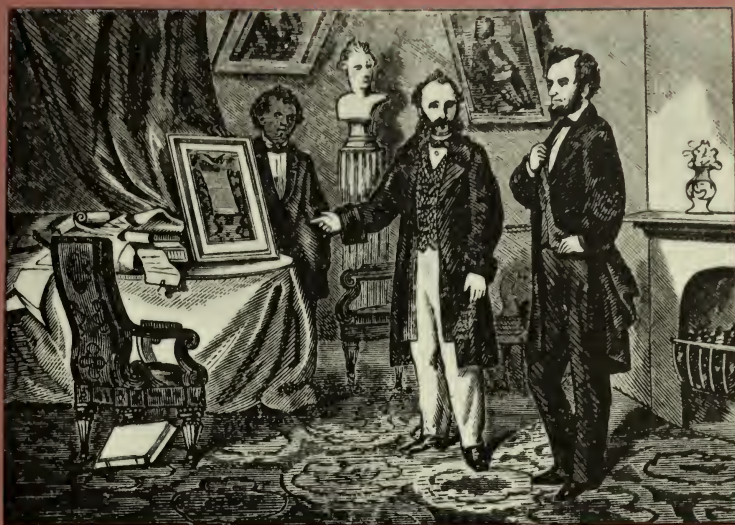




Changing The Lincoln Image

HAROLD HOLZER · GABOR S. BORITT
MARK E. NEELY, JR.

CHANGING
THE LINCOLN IMAGE

December 1, 2010

Jane Gastineau
Allen County Public Library
900 Library Plaza
Fort Wayne, IN 46801-2270

Dear Jane,

Last year I sent you some items related to William O. Stoddard to put in his collection at your library. I am still rummaging through items related to Abraham Lincoln and found this soft-cover document, *Changing The Lincoln Image* by Harold Holzer et al, which was published by the Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library in 1985. You probably have copies of this document, but here's another in case they are running out.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Eleanor Stoddard". The ink is dark and the handwriting is fluid.

4701 Willard Avenue, #1033
Chevy Chase, MD 20816
ehstoddard@aol.com

Changing
The Lincoln Image

By

HAROLD HOLZER · GABOR S. BORITT

MARK E. NEELY, JR.

LOUIS A. WARREN
LINCOLN LIBRARY AND MUSEUM

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

1985

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COVER ILLUSTRATION: Detail from an 1865 advertising sheet featuring a portrait of Lincoln contemplating a print portrait of himself. It is the only depiction of Lincoln together with one of his own print portraits. See figure 35.

*Dedicated to the Institutions
that made*

The Lincoln Image
possible:

LINCOLN NATIONAL LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

PENNSYLVANIA HUMANITIES COUNCIL

PENNSYLVANIA COUNCIL ON THE ARTS

BETHLEHEM STEEL

GETTYSBURG COLLEGE



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Preface

THE LATTER HALF of the 1970s brought an unexpected but welcome renaissance in Lincoln scholarship that has continued into the 1980s. Lincoln students had good reason to hope, as the 175th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birth in 1984 approached, that celebrations of the event would not be devoid of scholarly content. They were not to be disappointed.

Although no umbrella organization was created by Congress or anyone else in 1984—like the one for the Lincoln sesquicentennial in 1959—a number of private organizations, usually with support from public sources, did sponsor commemorations. Among these were the traveling exhibition, *The Lincoln Image: Abraham Lincoln and the Popular Print*, and the September symposium, *Lincoln 175: Where We are and Whither We are Tending in Lincoln Scholarship*.

Both events were held at Gettysburg College in Pennsylvania, a campus that echoed with Lincoln activity throughout the birthday year, even as it had once echoed with the cries of war wounded, brought there to be treated or to die, during the bloody battle of July 1863.

The Lincoln Image opened on February 12, 1984, in the college's new art gallery, with a celebration that included banquet addresses, gallery tours, a concert by the U.S. Army Field Band and Soldier's Chorus, and a performance of Aaron Copland's *A Lincoln Portrait*. The exhibition remained at Gettysburg for more than seven months, where it was visited by 10,000 people from 31 states, closing September 16, at the conclusion of the *Lincoln 175* conference, an unprecedented gathering of Lincoln scholars. *The Lincoln Image* then began a national tour, traveling to the John Hay Library at Brown University, the Fort Wayne Museum of Art, the Indiana Historical Bureau, and the Newberry Library in Chicago.

The exhibit was accompanied by a book published by Charles Scribner's Sons in February 1984. The first printing sold out in six weeks, a second printing was ordered, and the book was widely reviewed in the trade, scholarly, and popular press.

Surely, we reasoned, this unexpected attention stemmed at least in part from the fact that we were entering new territory. But just as surely as pioneering often attracts notice, the inevitable missteps that accompany it need forbearance—and prompt correction.

In some ways, authors are potentially the best critics of their own work especially when their interest in a subject does not end with the appearance of their book.

This essay attempts to improve upon our earlier, larger work. In the best of all publishing worlds—the likes of which authors have not experienced, we are told, since shortly after the invention of moveable type—a book might be brought out in a second edition, small errors corrected, and new research included. But when is the last time a “revised and enlarged edition” of anything but the most universal reference works could be so published? We are fortunate to be able to bring out this companion volume, in the hope that those who have added *The Lincoln Image* to their libraries will find this supplement worthwhile.

We felt a need to supplement the Scribner’s volume even before it arrived in the nation’s bookstores. Readers sent us valuable information we had not yet seen. Other authors, Gary Wills, for example, pursued related themes, in turn inspiring us to apply their fresh insights to our subject. And in the natural course of our own continuing research, we made new discoveries that made us grit our teeth a bit.

By the time we appeared together in September 1984 as speakers at *Lincoln 175*, on the last weekend of our exhibition’s stay at Gettysburg College, we were all-too-well aware of what remained to be done. Fortunately, the theme of the conference called on the invited Lincoln authors to report on and update their research. We too reexamined our barely seven-month-old work. Next, an invitation from Brown University provided us an opportunity to look at the subject again. These efforts in turn evolved into this booklet.

If *The Lincoln Image*, represented a “beginning,” as we suggested in its introduction, the present venture might best be characterized as a progress report. We hope and expect that it will be followed by other studies—from us as well as from others who have been, or will become intrigued by the Lincoln image.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We wish to acknowledge the help of several individuals and institutions without whom this project could not have been undertaken. We are particularly indebted to Jim Gilreath of the Rare Books division of the Library of Congress, for giving us unlimited access and expert guidance to the extraordinary Alfred W.

Stern Lincolniana collection, and for providing us an advance look at his valuable research on 19th-century publishing. The descendants of artist Thomas M. Johnston allowed us to examine the painter's papers, and gave us permission to publish for the first time the family's only photograph of him. Similarly, Lincoln artist Francis B. Carpenter's great-grandson, Lawrence Ives, graciously allowed us to visit his home and study his ancestor's revealing diaries and sketchbook albums.

In addition, we wish to thank Brown University, The Lincoln Group of Boston (especially Frank J. Williams, its president), the Fort Wayne Museum of Art, the Civil War Round Table of Fort Wayne, and that city's chapter of the American Historical Print Collector's Society, for providing us the first opportunities for publicly presenting the materials in this booklet.

We are also grateful to the institutions that have welcomed *The Lincoln Image* exhibition thus far since its opening at Gettysburg College in February, 1984: Brown University (particularly Frank Williams, Merilee Taylor, Sam Streit, and Jennifer Lee); the Fort Wayne Museum of Art (B. Jane Kite); the Indiana Historical Bureau (Pamela Bennett); and the Newberry Library in Chicago (Lawrence Towner and Mary Wylie).

Finally, we offer special and heartfelt thanks to those who provided with assistance, support, and encouragement: Tina Fair at Gettysburg College; Ruth Cook, Jewel Fowler, and Marilyn Tolbert at the Lincoln Library and Museum; and Sandra Jones at the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center of New York.

H.H., G.S.B., M.E.N., Jr.

Introduction

“ALL WAS CONFUSION, hurry, disorder, mud, riot and discomfort” at the Broadway railroad crossing in Albany, New York, as correspondent Henry Villard described it for Horace Greeley’s *Tribune*. The date was February 18, 1861. Thirteen weeks earlier, Abraham Lincoln, the little-known Republican from Illinois, had won election to the presidency. Now, a huge and frenzied crowd of well-wishers were gathered at Albany’s main depot to welcome the special train that was carrying him toward Washington for his inauguration.¹

In all likelihood, not one of these people had ever cast eyes on Lincoln, and they seemed almost desperate now to do so. When the President-elect’s train pulled into the station a few minutes ahead of schedule, even before the city police and special military honor guard had arrived, adults and youngsters alike surged forward for their first glimpse of the nation’s new leader. Onlookers scrambled out of control. Children climbed onto the engine and their mothers pushed into the crowd to catch them. Even the mayor was badly jostled.

Not until the guards had arrived and restored order with hooded muskets drawn, could Lincoln be led from the train to a special speakers’ platform that had been built near the tracks. The delay served only to heighten the sense of anticipation among the onlookers. “Excitement” became “intense,” reported Villard. Then, at last, the great moment came. But when Abraham Lincoln finally stepped onto the platform, hat in hand, he was greeted not with the roar of pent-up enthusiasm that might have been expected, but with only perplexed stares and “a faint cheer.”²

“Standing uncovered . . . the President-elect was barely recognized by the crowd,” Villard observed, “and anxiety to see him and to be certain that they saw the right man overcame any disposition to cheer.” Such an embarrassment could never befall today’s media-exposed presidential candidates or their image-saturated constituents. But, Villard seemed anything but surprised that it was happening to Lincoln in 1861. “When the eyes of the people were so very wide

open it is no wonder that their mouths remained shut, and that Mr. Lincoln was not cheered . . . ,” he said, explaining: “Lincoln, tired, sunburned, adorned with huge whiskers, looked so unlike the hale, smooth shaven, red-cheeked individual who is represented upon the popular prints and is dubbed the ‘rail splitter’ that it is no wonder that the people did not recognize him until his extreme height distinguished him unmistakably.”³

If Lincoln was surprised or upset he did not show it. He spoke cordially. He waved amiably from his carriage en route to the state capitol. And he offered a heartfelt address to a joint session of the legislature. But there could be no doubt that Lincoln had been upstaged by a universally held, preconceived notion about his image. Widely circulated campaign engravings and lithographs, and other pictures, had so successfully turned the little-known western politician into a familiar face that the newly bearded president-elect who stood before the crowd in Albany that afternoon had seemed a stranger. Lincoln’s post-election decision to grow whiskers had been reported in many newspapers, but apparently not yet illustrated in the revised campaign portraits which the printmakers were so busily concocting. Albany had expected a railsplitter, not a bearded statesman.⁴

Two aspects of Villard’s report of Lincoln’s 1861 passage through Albany deserve note. First, it is the best period account of a mass public response to the changing Lincoln image, a response and an image Villard thought attributable to popular prints. Second, although we have all read Villard long ago, we did not turn to it again with iconography in mind, in time to include it in our book.

Such post-publication “discoveries,” and more substantial ones as well, are inevitable. Our area of study is relatively new, and we have hoped that *The Lincoln Image* would inspire historians and curators, and buffs too, to bring forward new materials—whether from the hidden corner of a museum or attic, or from the recesses of fertile minds. We were not disappointed. Hence this essay.

Our purpose here is to provide useful *errata* based on new materials and new ideas, and to include some that we had to exclude, for one reason or another, from *The Lincoln Image*. Within the latter category we will advance some general methodological suggestions for interpreting political prints.

We do not believe that this new information substantially alters our thesis. We still consider the popular prints of Abraham Lincoln the results of what was principally a market-driven, commercially inspired phenomenon possible only in the emotionally charged, image-starved American political culture of the mid-nineteenth century. In that culture, partisanship was openly displayed, politics was all-consuming, and the political icon emerged as heir to the religious picture.

We still believe—we have found convincing reinforcement—that these prints did not evolve from political movements themselves, nor from the party professionals who might have foreseen their potential impact on mass audiences. Rather, most came from the art publishing industry directly to the audience. They were pictures genuinely of, by, and for the people.

Paintings Into Prints

THE MAN WHO DESERVES, but who in his own lifetime failed to earn, the title of premier Lincoln image-maker, was the New York painter Francis Bicknell Carpenter. (fig. 1) He was the most imaginative, influential, persistent, and commercially alert of all the artists and publishers who interpreted the political and personal images of Lincoln for the medium of popular prints.

His style may have been mundane, his vision occasionally askew, and his timing flawed, but he was the most astute of his generation at perceiving and illustrating the two appealing poles of the Lincoln image: Lincoln the family man and Lincoln the official man, the husband and father at home and the president and liberator at work.

There remains uncertainty, however, over precisely when the most famous of Carpenter's Lincoln prints was made available to the public: the Alexander Hay Ritchie engraving of Carpenter's history painting, *The First Reading of the Emancipation Proclamation*. In *The Lincoln Image*, we dated the print at 1864 and suggested that its widespread availability that year might have inhibited the production of campaign prints for the presidential election.⁵

There was ample evidence to support this assumption. Lincoln himself, we discovered, had signed on as a subscriber to an artist's proof in 1864. On July 25, 1864, Noah Brooks, reporting on the White House exhibition of the just-completed Carpenter canvas (an effort he dismissed as commonplace), noted: "... it will soon be popular and familiar with all people through the medium of engravings." When the painting was displayed later that year in Boston, the exhibition catalogue announced that the "Great National Painting" was "now being executed" as a "magnificent Steel Plate Engraving."⁶

Noah Brooks, for one, was eager for the Ritchie adaptation to reach the market. Brooks predicted commercial success for the effort, and through it, lasting, favorable comparison for the Emancipation Proclamation with the

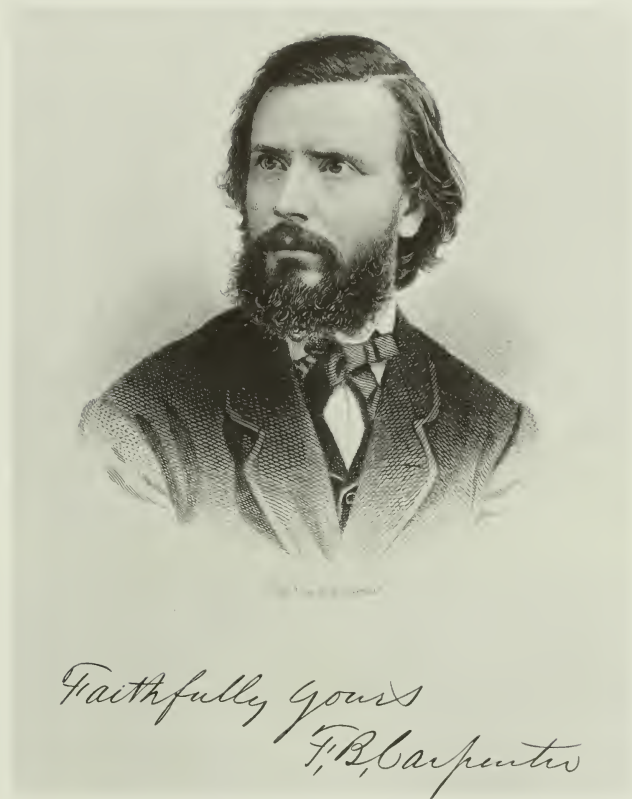


FIGURE 1. Francis Bicknell Carpenter. Engraving by Alexander Hay Ritchie, New York (c. 1867). (*Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum*)

Declaration of Independence, the scene of which had also been engraved for a popular print. "The chief faults which are now noticeable will be remedied in the engraving," Brooks wrote of the Carpenter original, "and when this large, life-size painting is reduced to a fine, clear engraving the size of the Signing of the Declaration of Independence, there will be furnished a picture which will be prized in every liberty-loving household as a work of art, a group of faithful

likenesses of the President and his cabinet, and as a perpetual remembrance of the noblest event in American history.”⁷

But we have reason now to doubt that the meticulous, demanding, chronically dissatisfied, perpetual reviser Carpenter really permitted his picture’s timely adaptation, as advertised and hoped. There is no mention in Carpenter’s heavily expunged diaries of when, precisely, the *Emancipation* print came off the presses of his publisher, Derby & Miller of New York, but his revealing entries, unavailable to us until recently, permit the piecing together of a more accurate chronology. Carpenter says in his diaries that he did not sign his contract with Derby & Miller until January 16, 1865, did not register the design for a copyright until January 28, and was busily making revisions in his canvas well into the spring. Although many pages from Carpenter’s 1866 diaries are missing, the surviving entries indicate that the artist was first signing proofs of the print in May of that year: sixty-seven on May 2 and another sixty on the 16th. He noted seeing engraver Ritchie “About lettering on Plate” as late as May 26, and that day “sent off last of revised proof sheets.” On July 13, he recorded signing “100 Artist Proofs.” These diary entries seem to prove beyond question that Ritchie’s print of the *Emancipation* painting did not, in fact, appear until the summer of 1866 at the earliest, two years after Lincoln ordered his artist’s proof, and more than a year after his death.⁸

This new information is not altogether surprising, since Carpenter habitually and misleadingly dated many of his Lincoln works “1864,” no doubt to represent the year he worked on Lincoln from life at the White House. Even the 1866 Ritchie plate bore the half-hidden inscription, “FBC/1864.” The new date does, however, provide much valuable and hitherto unknown insight into the printmaking process. One can only imagine Carpenter’s frustration when a project that took so long to reach fruition was then quickly pirated by rival printmakers. Such clumsy reworkings of Carpenter’s ideologically positioned group portrait haphazardly rearranged its subjects to make their fakery less obvious, with no sense of the lost political message that had been implicit in the original: the cabinet radicals at the left, the conservatives at the right, and Lincoln in the center, holding them together. In *The Lincoln Image* we presented one such piracy, a print by Edward Herline. A new one has come to light that also deserves mention. The obvious piracy was New York lithographer Thomas Kelly’s *President Lincoln and His Cabinet* (fig. 2), in which Lincoln, Seward, Chase, and Stanton were depicted in virtually the same poses as in Carpenter’s original. With obvious indifference to both patriotic and copyright constraints, Kelly simultaneously issued *Jefferson Davis and His Cabinet* (fig. 3), which turned out to



THOMAS KELLY. PRESIDENT LINCOLN AND HIS CABINET.

FIGURE 2. Th[omas]. Kelly, *President Lincoln and His Cabinet. / With General Grant in the Council Chamber of the Whitehouse, New York (1866)*. Lithograph. (Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum)



JEFFERSON DAVIS AND HIS CABINET.

FIGURE 3. Th[omas]. Kelly, *Jefferson Davis and His Cabinet. / With General Lee in the Council Chamber at Richmond, orig. pub. New York (1866)*. Lithograph. (Library of Congress)

be little more than the identical composition, now with the visages of Confederate leaders placed incongruously atop the bodies of the Northern leaders in the Carpenter. By 1866, when both of Kelly's prints were published, Southern markets were beginning to reopen, after a four-year war during which print-makers' access to these customers had been cut off. It is not surprising that this Northern lithographer looked South for a new audience for his piracy. And while Kelly could never seek copyright protection for his derivative Lincoln print, he did register his Davis group in a rather audacious attempt to prevent rivals from copying what he had so obviously copied himself—and then cleverly disguised. The Kelly prints bear the date of 1866, which reinforces the conclusions we have reached about the chronology of Ritchie's authorized adaptation.

All the evidence suggests that *First Reading* could not have been a print for the 1864 campaign. It was originally, and it remains, a print for posterity.

Whenever it was issued, there can be no doubting the enormous impact it had on the marketplace. Publisher J. C. Derby, the man who paid engraver Ritchie \$6,000 to transfer the painting to steel, recalled years later: "For several months after the plate was finished, the orders could only be supplied by printing from the plate day and night. . . . Nearly 30,000 impressions were printed from the steel plate, which is now worn out." Indeed, many copies of the engraving—including, regrettably, the print displayed in the traveling exhibition of *The Lincoln Image*—were so poorly inked, or so marred by the wearing down of the engraver's plate, that the image of Andrew Jackson above the cabinet room mantel, was no longer recognizable.⁹

Despite such flaws, the picture's enduring popularity broke longevity records, even for Lincoln prints. As late as 1895, a new version, copyrighted by Carpenter himself, and including a facsimile of the Emancipation Proclamation text, appeared in an "extraordinarily limited offer" of 1,000 copies at prices ranging from one to twenty-five dollars. Thus the print lasted in fresh editions, some thirty years. Its marketplace durability reflected not only the power of the collecting impulse in America, but the enormously appealing vision of image-maker Francis Bicknell Carpenter.

* * *

The same cannot be said for the most mundane of Carpenter's Lincoln prints, a portrait we did not include in the original *Lincoln Image*. So many Lincoln prints appeared between 1860 and the years immediately following his assassination that no single volume, however thick and well-illustrated, could have hoped to reproduce even a hefty fraction of them. We found ourselves rejecting far more

pictures than we selected for our 1984 book. In retrospect, we may have banished several representative works precipitately. One such effort was a Carpenter.

The print, which has grown much more appealing with further study, is the engraving by Frederick W. Halpin (fig. 4) of the model head of Lincoln painted in the White House in 1864 by Carpenter (pl. 1). Precisely how Carpenter conceived the plan to seek additional commercial profit from his White House study is not fully known, nor, perhaps, will the genesis of its production ever fully be sorted out. An important reason for this uncertainty is the dearth of original written sources. Printmaking was more a business than an art or a political endeavor, and like most businessmen the printmakers seldom left records of their political ideas or artistic motives.

A rare exception is the heavily expurgated diaries of Carpenter which indicate that he may have come up with the idea to publish a separate adaptation of the model head when the American Bank Note Company surprised him with a \$1,000 offer for the right to use the picture on the three-dollar bill. (A mirror image of the pose eventually did appear on American currency [pl. 2], not on the three-dollar note, but on the fifty-cent fractional note in circulation between July 4, 1869, and February 16, 1875.) The first real mention of the plan to issue a separate sheet engraving of the study came in June, 1866, at which time Carpenter recorded that he was "touching up Halpin's proof of head of Lincoln from my study." It is important to remember that the enterprising Carpenter was at this time simultaneously revising his Emancipation Proclamation canvas, contracting for its further national touring, arranging for its engraved adaptation, laboring to bring out his book *Six Months at the White House*, and selling one-time rights to the Halpin design for book frontispieces and reproduction in the picture newspapers, where thousands of Americans saw early versions of the Halpin adaptation. Carpenter was a busy man in 1866, and Lincoln was his cottage industry.¹⁰

Above all else, he knew how to market his art works. He sought reviews, solicited testimonials, and then published excerpts from them in wordy advertisements. As early as December 27, 1865, the Boston *Transcript* was taking note, probably at Carpenter's urging, of the yet-to-be-published Halpin print, noting: "No expense has been spared in its reproduction by the graver. In execution it will rival the well-known English portraits. . . . The want of a first-rate portrait of Mr. Lincoln has long been felt in this community, and we predict for this one a large sale."¹¹

The print, like Carpenter's Emancipation engraving, was delayed, until at



FIGURE 4. F[rederick]. Halpin, after a life portrait by F. B. Carpenter, *Abraham Lincoln* [facsimile signature], New York (1865). Engraving. (Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum)

least mid-1866. We know that it was still available in 1867, the year A. J. Johnson & Company, publishers of the Halpin engraving, also brought out Fred B. Perkins' little book, *The Picture and the Men*, a guide to the Carpenter Emancipation painting and print.

Advertisements in books can be a useful source of information on prints and how they were marketed. Realizing that anyone who bought such a book would be a likely customer for the Halpin print as well, Johnson & Co., no doubt with Carpenter's help, had made sure that the last two pages of the volume were devoted to reproducing testimonials attesting to the fidelity of "The standard portrait—now ready" by Halpin (fig. 5). The advertisement managed to list all of Carpenter's important portraitmaking credits, including presidential subjects such as Fillmore, Tyler, and Pierce, and even mentioned in passing that there had recently been increased demand for the Ritchie Emancipation engraving "since the reduction in price." But its main business was selling the Halpin engraving, and its appeal to the public was cleverly crafted. Carpenter had

FIGURE 5. Advertisement from Fred. B. Perkins' book *The Picture and the Men* (New York: A. J. Johnson, 1867)

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

THE STANDARD PORTRAIT—NOW READY.

PAINTED FROM LIFE, AT THE WHITE HOUSE, IN 1864.

BY F. B. CARPENTER.

And Magnificently reproduced on Steel, in Line and Stipple,
BY F. HALPIN.

SIZE OF SHEET, 24 BY 30 INCHES.

For six months Mr. CARPENTER was an inmate of the WHITE HOUSE, studying the countenance and character of President Lincoln. His great painting,

"The First Reading of the Emancipation Proclamation," engraved upon Steel by A. H. FURNESS, of which engraving thousands have been sold, with an increased demand since the reduction in price by the undersigned; and his book, "SIX MONTHS AT THE WHITE HOUSE," exhibit the closeness of his intercourse with Mr. Lincoln and the fidelity of his study. Carpenter's "Lincoln" must soon become a household word. It is

THE FAVORITE PORTRAIT OF THE LINCOLN FAMILY.

The following distinguished persons were painted from life by Mr. Carpenter: Millard Fillmore, Franklin Pierce, John Tyler, Wm. L. Miller, Wm. H. Seward, Lewis Cass, Salmon P. Chase, Sam Houston, Edwin M. Stanton, Andrew Weller, Schuyler Colfax, Edward Butler, Caleb Cushing, Montgomery Blair, John C. Fremont, Horace Greeley, Gov. Nyron H. Clark, Judge Stephen J. Field, Dr. Lyman Beecher, Henry Ward Beecher, Rev. Drs. Cox, Field, Storrs, Bacon, Bushnell, John Pierpont, and many others.

From the Publisher of the "New York Tribune."

I well remember the occasion of Mr. Lincoln's sitting to you, at which I was present. * * * Mr. Lincoln then made this remark: "I feel that there is more of me in this portrait than in any representation which has ever been made." I think these were his very words.

Truly yours, SAMUEL SINCLAIR.

From Mrs. LINCOLN.

F. B. CARPENTER: My Dear Sir—* * * I write you to-day to thank you for the most perfect likeness of my beloved husband that I have ever seen. The resemblance is so accurate in Mr. Halpin's engraving that it will require far more evidence than I can now command to have it faked continually before me. * * *

Very truly your friend,

MARY LINCOLN.

From Mr. ROBERT T. LINCOLN.

MR. F. B. CARPENTER: My Dear Sir—I received your letter and engraving several days ago, and I beg you to excuse my delay in acknowledging your kindness. Mr. Halpin has had most extraordinary success in engraving your portrait of my father, and has made the best likeness that I have seen. I do not know that I can express my idea of better than by saying that I am perfectly satisfied with it as a likeness. Mr. Marshall made a very good picture, but there is something unsatisfactory about it which I can not explain, and I would have no hesitation in choosing between the two. Mr. Fuller, one of the gentlemen in whose office I am residing, who was an old personal friend of my father, was about purchasing Marshall's portrait, but on seeing this, immediately said that yours was the one he wanted. Speaking on the subject a day or two afterward, he said that your picture left a satisfied impression on his mind, which Marshall's, though pleasing while he was looking at it, did not. I mention this to show what is thought of your engraving by the only one of my father's personal friends who has seen it. * * * Please accept my thanks, and my heartiest wishes for the success which your work merits.

Very sincerely yours, ROBERT T. LINCOLN.

From Hon. WM. H. TRAVICK, for twenty years Mr. Lincoln's law-partner.

MR. F. B. CARPENTER: My Dear Sir—* * * I received per express, yesterday morning, your admirable and exquisite engraving by Halpin. When I opened the box and unrolled the portrait, Mr. Lincoln looked as never from picture. As a portrait—a likeness—it is Lincoln. His head rests naturally, easily, symmetrically on his shoulders; his hair parted upon

shipped proof copies to key Lincoln associates, and could now lift excerpts from their acknowledgements.

For example, Samuel Sinclair's letter was reprinted, in which he conveniently recalled Lincoln's remark "that there is more of me in this portrait than in any representation which has ever been made." Mary Lincoln's heartfelt thank-you note to the artist was also adapted—most likely without her consent or knowledge (she soon thereafter broke with Carpenter, a one-time favorite)—in which she acknowledged its receipt and noted: "The resemblance is so accurate in Mr. Halpin's engraving that it will require far more calmness than I can now command to have it placed continuously before me." Even William H. Herndon was asked to supply an endorsement, Lincoln's former law partner pronouncing Halpin's effort "exquisite" and adding dramatically: "When I opened the box and unrolled the portrait, Mr. Lincoln *flashed* on me as never before from picture. As a portrait—a likeness—it is Lincoln."¹² This quotation, clearly recognizable as Herndon's idiom, suggests that these sources were not manufactured hyperbole; in fact, original copies of some of these testimonial letters survive in Carpenter's papers.

As if these words of praise were not enough, Carpenter also used the ad to continue an artistic feud with painter William Edgar Marshall, who had produced a best-selling rival engraving of Lincoln. Carpenter felt his portrait superior to that of Marshall, who had never painted Lincoln from life. He resented the success of the Marshall engraving so much that his advertisement featured a number of direct criticisms of the competition. One was Robert Todd Lincoln's statement that a friend of his late father's had asserted that "your picture left a satisfied impression in his mind, which Marshall's, though pleasing while he was looking at it, did not." Then there was Herndon's comment that Halpin's print "looks to me . . . a better *portrait* and *likeness* than Marshall's . . . a superior work of art." And diplomat Robert Dale Owen offered his view that "Marshall's likeness . . . does not bring up before my mind any vivid recollection of Mr. Lincoln as I knew him." Halpin's, he said, "is the most faithful representation that has ever been or ever will be executed. . . ."¹³

Apparently, Carpenter did not start the feud. From another quoted comment in the advertisement we learn that it was Marshall's publisher, Ticknor & Fields, who probably ignited the war of words by issuing "an unwarranted fling at the character" of the Halpin print. That is the explanation provided in the most convincing of all the reprinted testimonials, a rebuttal secured by Carpenter from the New York Steel Plate Engravers, probably a trade association. Their endorsement stated "unhesitatingly . . . that your engraving of Lincoln is

the finest and most artistic piece of portraiture-engraving ever executed on the continent, and is decidedly superior to Mr. Marshall's. . . . We say this without any unfriendly feeling toward Ticknor & Fields or Mr. Marshall, but simply as an act of justice to you and also that the public, who are not judges of engraving, may understand the facts in the case." What made their statement all the more convincing was that its signatories included three of Halpin's major New York printmaking competitors who had Lincoln prints of their own on the market at the time: Alexander Hay Ritchie, whose association with Carpenter on the Emancipation print helps explain his support in this case; John Chester Buttre, whose own print of Lincoln, based on a Brady photograph and surrounded by allegorical border portraits, was such a best-seller it had already been pirated by photographers in paper and tintype; and George E. Perine, who not only had a Lincoln portrait on the market, but one based on a photograph that Lincoln himself may well have provided, or at least suggested, as a model.¹⁴

It is doubtful that anyone but Carpenter could have stage-managed the marketing campaign for Halpin's print, a product that, to modern eyes, seems wholly undeserving of the praise which he elicited for it. The portrait sold for \$15 for artist's proofs, \$7.75 for india proofs, and \$4.75 for plain prints. According to the advertisement in the Perkins book, by 1867 it was available in New York, through agents in Ohio, Michigan, and Illinois, and also through the mails. Since there is no available data on how many copies were printed of either the Halpin or Marshall, it is impossible to know who won the war between the prints.

* * *

Papers and diaries were useful in another case: that of artist Thomas M. Johnston and a hitherto unknown campaign lithograph based on his work. Unlike Halpin's, it is a print that deserved wide exposure, but instead must rank as one of the most perplexing failures of all Lincoln prints.

Its recent discovery represents the most unexpected and important piece of new pictorial evidence to come to light since the appearance of *The Lincoln Image*. It also serves to correct our precipitate claim that we had become the first to unearth and publish a long-lost life portrait of Lincoln from the campaign of 1860.

Lincoln scholars for generations have known that in the summer of 1860, a Boston artist named Thomas M. Johnston (fig. 6) was sent to Springfield by publisher C. H. Brainard to prepare a life-study of presidential candidate Lincoln that could be brought back east and adapted into a popular print.

The story of Johnston's journey and his sittings with Lincoln were well-documented. Original correspondence from his trip survived to add substance and color to the episode. The only mystery that persisted was why the lithograph ultimately issued by Brainard in Boston, and imprinted with the initials "TMJ," looked exactly like an 1858 photograph, not an original study from life. Had Johnston failed so miserably in Springfield that his publisher had chosen to discard his model and instead adapt a two-year-old photograph? Or had Johnston found Lincoln such a difficult subject that he had fallen back on what Van Deren Coke has called "the nineteenth-century artist's reliance on photographs"¹⁵ as a crutch necessary to produce a satisfactory likeness of Lincoln? And, where was the life painting? No one seemed to know. As late as 1969, Stefan Lorant wrote: "Johnston died young in France in 1869—and the secret went with him."¹⁶



FIGURE 6. Thomas M. Johnston. (c. 1861). (*Photograph courtesy of Johnston Family Archives*)

After researching *The Lincoln Image*, we believed that we had cracked the mystery and revealed the secret that had proven so elusive. To be more precise, we had stumbled across the existence of an original Johnston painting, hanging in the United States embassy in Brussels, Belgium, which looked exactly like Brainard's 1860 lithograph. Here at last, we thought, was the long-lost life portrait. And so, we reasoned, it had been Johnston, like several artists before and after him, who had relied upon photographic models to paint Lincoln from the flesh. He had probably found Lincoln such a difficult subject he had been compelled to consult camera studies to augment his sittings.

We were wrong.

The real solution to this century-old mystery did not begin to fit into place until the 1984 publication of *American Portrait Prints*. In a chapter on the life and work of Boston lithographer Francis D'Avignon, we found an unexpected piece of evidence. D'Avignon's best-known work had come as the lithographer of Mathew Brady's 1850 *Gallery of Illustrious Americans*, described as "the most ambitious attempt . . . to publish lithographic reproductions of daguerreotype portraits. . . ." Among D'Avignon's later works was an 1860 portrait of Lincoln—after Thomas M. Johnston (fig. 7). While the article in *American Portrait Prints* made no mention of the age-old Brainard-Johnston mystery, here, suddenly, was a new and unknown print portrait of Lincoln, allegedly based on a Johnston model but entirely unlike the Brainard print and the just-discovered oil painting in Belgium.¹⁷

There could be a little doubt about what the new evidence represented: this was a decidedly original Lincoln study, owing no debt to known photographs, a likeness, furthermore, that bore enough resemblance to Thomas Hicks' life portrait of Lincoln, also produced in 1860, to suggest strongly that all our assumptions about Johnston and his previously known work had been faulty. Thanks to Merl H. Moore, Jr., who shared some of his detailed research into the Boston press of the period, and to the descendants of artist Johnston, who still live in the painter's home in Boston, the chronology can finally be set straight.

It now seems clear that the Brainard Lincoln print in *The Lincoln Image* was published earlier than we had thought—in May, 1860, just after Lincoln's nomination. It is signed "TMJ" because it was *lithographed* by Johnston, then working for Brainard as a printmaker, and it was based not on life sittings but on a "daguerreotype," evidently a daguerrian copy of the 1858 photograph by C. S. German, several examples of which have come to light in recent years. The Boston *Transcript* reviewed the portrait print on June 1, terming it "a most excellent lithographic portrait of the Republican candidate."¹⁸

It was not until the following month that Brainard sent Johnston to Springfield to do a life study in yet another medium in which the artist had been experimenting: the crayon portrait, whose technique was not unlike that of lithography. This effort would be the model for a *second* Brainard print. From the outset, publisher Brainard assured the press that the portrait would be “lithographed in the best style by D’Avignon.”¹⁹

A Philadelphia journalist, observing Johnston at work in Springfield (in yet another piece of material we did not come upon until our book was in print), complained that “the pictures which have already been published are but a slight remove from broad caricature.” Asserting that neither the works of Hicks nor Charles Alfred Barry, artists who preceded Johnston to Springfield, had approached “any degree of fidelity,” the reporter took one look at Johnston’s work-in-progress and declared: “the present crayon sketch by Mr. Johnson [*sic*] if faithfully reproduced will be an admirable picture.” In mid-August John G. Nicolay, Lincoln’s secretary, forwarded to Johnston, back in Boston, what he called the “long neglected” Lincoln autograph evidently needed for the facsimile signature beneath the D’Avignon adaptation.

In this recently discovered letter, Nicolay provided some proof of the relative unimportance in which professional politicians held professional image-making. As Nicolay confessed in explaining the delay: “. . . the fact is that . . . considerable excitement over our late home Mass Meeting has compelled me to give almost everything the ‘go-by.’ Below I send you Mr. Lincoln’s Autograph.” With the signature finally in hand, work on the print could continue. On August 16, Johnston recorded in his diary: “Called on Mr. Brainard . . . saw D’Avignon at work on Lincoln.” Later that month, this second Johnston print—the only one actually based on a life portrait, and the one to which Johnston’s published correspondence had always referred—finally appeared.²⁰

The effort impressed the *Transcript* critic, who wrote on August 29 that “it at once gives the beholder an agreeable impression of the tall Illinoisian, who has hitherto been so grossly caricatured. . . . The friends of ‘Honest Old Abe’ will doubtless highly prize this picture and create for it an extensive demand.”²¹

In that reasonable *Transcript* prediction lies the germ of yet another mystery, the solution of which may never be found. Judging alone from the number of surviving lithographs, D’Avignon’s print proved anything but “extensively demanded.” We have located only one copy. Far more copies exist of the earlier Johnston lithograph of the C. S. German photograph.

Whatever the reasons for its rarity, the new evidence about Johnston’s prints of Lincoln (a third, a Lincoln-Hamlin poster based on the Springfield crayon,



FIGURE 7. F[rancis]. D'Avignon after a life portrait by Thomas M. Johnston, *Yours truly* / A. Lincoln [facsimile signature]. Lithograph. (Courtesy, Essex Institute, Salem, Mass.)

would also appear), represents the most important new discovery since *The Lincoln Image* appeared. But it raises almost as many questions as it answers.

Where is the real Johnston original? And why did Johnston paint an oil portrait of a lithograph of a daguerreotype of a photograph?²² In other words, what is the explanation for our so-called “discovery” in the Brussels embassy?

Johnston’s descendants, who generously came forward to share their family papers after reading excerpts from our book, never knew of the existence of the July 1860 crayon and its August 1860 lithographic adaptation until we told *them*. Displayed in the family den is the earlier Johnston lithograph, which the family, like the Lincoln scholars, always presumed to be the print based on the life portrait.

The complicated Johnston episode makes one other interesting point, not about the artist, but about his publisher, C. H. Brainard. This was one printmaker who apparently strove to better his rivals, and even himself, by sending an artist to update a perfectly acceptable and apparently saleable campaign print. That he spent the money to ship his artist west in search of something more accurate and up-to-date, running the risk that in so doing he would find no significant new audience for the result, provides a convincing exception to the general rule that we ourselves have advanced: that printmakers of the Lincoln era tended to produce as little original work as they could in an effort to make profits, not lasting art, out of their focus on Abraham Lincoln. Brainard was different.

Perhaps the saddest aspect of the Johnston story is that this rare example of lasting art did not last at all.

Politics, Images, and the Marketplace

ONE KEY TO UNDERSTANDING Lincoln images lies in the comprehension of political and artistic traditions, broad conventions that did not necessarily refer specifically to Lincoln or to the political culture peculiar to the 1860s. The iconography of campaign prints, for example, can be misleading. In *The Lincoln Image* we provided what we thought was a convincing analysis of an 1864 campaign print, the Lincoln-Johnson poster published by E. B. & E. C. Kellogg of Hartford, Connecticut (pl. 3). Its imagery, we suggested, featuring bucolic tranquility suggested by a harvest spilling over from twin cornucopias, was meant to imply "a promise possible only through Union and Victory."

Subsequently we discovered that the identical design had been used by Kellogg & Hanmer at least as early as 1844 for a Clay-Frelinghuysen campaign poster and then again in 1852 for Winfield Scott and his running-mate William A. Graham (pl. 4). As would happen so frequently, a Lincoln print design had been held hostage to the format and symbolism of the past in order to speed production. Lest one conclude that iconographical insights are valueless, it is worthwhile noting that the imagery of plenty fit nicely the messages of both the Whig and Republican parties. Thus, in the end, the repetition of motifs is neither surprising nor inappropriate.

* * *

One iconographical detail whose origins and suggestive meanings were unmistakable then, as now, was the ubiquitous log rail—the symbolic rail that Lincoln split. We lamented our inability to unearth and publish more prints, other than caricature, that gave visual expression to this prevailing image of the 1860 presidential campaign: that of the railsplitter who personified in his rise from obscurity the tangible potential of the American dream. We have since found some rich editorial and illustrative material that testifies convincingly to the importance of Lincoln's 1860 railsplitter image.

On June 9, 1860, the New York *Times* assailed representations of Lincoln "in various picturesque attitudes as a rail-splitter and as a guider of oxen," declaring: "All of this is very silly, and we cannot help thinking very useless." Recalling the "Log Cabin and Hard Cider" campaign of William Henry Harrison twenty years earlier, the *Times* warned the Republicans that the memory of that success was "likely to mislead enthusiastic politicians into the belief that similar results can now be produced by similar devices. . . ." Voters, the *Times* predicted, would reject the effort to "excite the enthusiasm of the nation by detailing the exploits of 'Honest Old Abe' with a maul and a wedge." Besides, the *Times* insisted, "a rail is not per se picturesque nor does it suggest experiences upon which the average public mind longs to linger."

But linger it did. In fact, in that very same issue of the *Times*, printmaker H. H. Lloyd took out an advertisement for his *National Republican Chart*, declaring: "200,000 Republicans wanted to buy the Grant Campaign Chart for 1860 and to vote for Lincoln and Hamlin. The chart has large LIFE-LIKE PORTRAITS OF LINCOLN AND HAMLIN IN A VIGNETTE OF LOG RAILS engraved expressly for it." The price was 25-cents.²³

For a while the *Times* persisted in its argument against the railsplitter image, ignoring its encroachment on its own advertising pages. Even after the New York *Tribune* entered the debate, declaring that the use of the rail motif was merely an "emblematic reminder" of Lincoln's rise "from the class of men, stigmatized . . . as the 'mud-sills' of Society," the *Times* insisted they were right. If Lincoln had been seeking a professorship of surgery based on his railsplitting accomplishments, they editorialized, would any sane patient be willing to "call Dr. Lincoln to perform an operation for the stone?" There was logic in the argument, but the editors were bucking the popular tide and eventually they backed down, conceding that they perhaps had been "hair-splitting on rail-splitting." Two days later, H. H. Lloyd again advertised his chart with its emblematic rail border. To show how little impact the *Times* had had on the growing interest in Lincoln's railsplitter image, Lloyd now called for not 200,000 but two *million* Americans to buy his print.²⁴

An 1860 campaign poem, recently found in the Alfred Stern Collection in the Library of Congress, probably better assesses the popular mood that season than any of the New York *Times*' urgings for serious debate.

Come, all ye brave lads of old '40,
Who rallied 'round Tippecanoe,
And give us your hearts and your voices
For LINCOLN the noble and true.



FIGURE 8. J[ohn]. H[enry]. Bufford, *The "Wigwam" Grand March*. / *Dedicated to the Republican Presidential Candidate*. / *Hon. Abm. Lincoln*, published by Oliver Ditson & Co., Boston (1860). Lithographed sheet music cover. (*Library of Congress*)

Aside from the subtle treatment of the railsplitting image in Lloyd's *National Republican Chart*, and the overt use of the symbol in both pro- and anti-Lincoln caricatures, we have found several new examples of its use in popular prints, and the corresponding use of a related image, that of Lincoln as a flatboatsman. John Henry Bufford's 1860 songsheet cover *The "Wigwam" Grand March* (fig. 8), for example, featured a well-executed mirror-image adaptation of the same C. S. German photograph Thomas Johnston had used for his first lithograph of Lincoln. But a tiny portrait in the margin of the print portrayed a young man chopping wood. No doubt its inclusion was intended to convey graphically Lincoln's large leap from frontier to national political stage. Another example of the genre can be found in a diminutive Lincoln-Hamlin campaign print portraying in rough outline a farm boy splitting rails outside a log cabin, above which is the caption: "A Home for the Homeless" (fig. 9), a reference to the free home-stead plank of the Republican platform.

Perhaps the most important of the recently discovered emblematic efforts is Franklin H. Brown's wood engraving (pl. 5), published by E. Whitefield in 1860, showing Lincoln as a young man steering a flatboat on the Mississippi River. The print, in the Brown University Collection, is the only other Lincoln image we have ever found by the engraver credited with producing the very first Lincoln print portrait, the so-called Wigwam print distributed at the Republican National Convention in Chicago in May 1860.²⁵ Actually, the University's description for the second Brown print is only partially correct. It is not a separate sheet engraving at all, but a central portrait in an oversized broadside called *The Republican Standard* (fig. 10), printed by Pool & Dean and published by Rufus Blanchard of Chicago. In the full version, the caption beneath the Brown portrait, *Lincoln As a Flatboatman on the Mississippi, Quincy in the Distance*, continues on to make this intriguing comparison: "Peter the Great, to Whose Genius Russia owes her fame, served an apprenticeship to ship building. Abraham Lincoln has served an apprenticeship to flatboating, and may he yet guide the ship of state with his own inherent honesty of purpose."

The emblems of opportunity had become metaphors for leadership.

* * *

The focus on Lincoln's railsplitter image, sharp as it was in 1860, should not suggest that printmakers rallied to the Republican cause and provided it with expressive illustrative ammunition. Indeed one can find evidence to counter any suspicion that these publishers were partisans rather than merchandisers.

One case again involves engraver H. H. Lloyd, who, with his forthright

FOR PRESIDENT,
ABRAM LINCOLN.



A Home for the Homeless.



VICE PRESIDENT,
HANNIBAL HAMLIN.

FIGURE 9. [Printmaker unknown], *For President, Abraham Lincoln*. Paper campaign badge, (1860). Woodcut engraving. (*Winter Associates*)



FIGURE 10. Pool & Dean, *The Republican Standard*, published by Rufus Blanchard, Chicago (1860). Photograph by Alexander Hesler and wood engravings by F. H. Brown and by Childs. (Library of Congress)

advertisement for Republican buyers for his *Republican Chart* (pl. 6), offered an effective rebuttal to the New York *Times*' attack on the use of the railsplitter image. Recently unearthed companion prints issued by the same H. H. Lloyd indicate that the *National Republican Chart* did not signal a pro-Lincoln bias by the printmaker. In fact, the chart was apparently one of a series meant to do at least passing, if not equal justice to other presidential candidates as well. Lloyd's format became something of an all-purpose broadside, easily adaptable to promote Democrats as convincingly as Republicans.

One of the newly discovered variants, possibly even a predecessor of the more familiar *Republican Chart*, was called *Political Chart. Presidential Campaign, 1860* (fig. 11). While it featured the same map and margin likenesses of the nation's first fifteen presidents, the central portraits were not of Lincoln and Hamlin alone, but included four other national candidates: Democrats Stephen A. Douglas and John C. Breckenridge, and their respective running mates, Herschel V. Johnson and Joseph Lane. Absent from the central cluster, but portrayed at the very top of the print, were Constitutional Union candidates John Bell and Edward Everett. Although it is conceivable that printmaker Lloyd had not calculated the emergence of Bell's ticket when he planned the engraving, their placement atop the others serves to suggest, whether justifiably or not, that this particular Lloyd variant was a pro-Union Party print. If not, then it must be considered non-partisan—a rarity among political broadsides, especially in election years.

To make the print even more complex, Lloyd included in the central group Sam Houston, who had briefly been the subject of a pre-convention boom but had certainly faded from the presidential scene once the four slates of candidates had been nominated. Here, for some reason, in a broadside portraying the major presidential nominees of 1860, inserted in the place of the Lincoln quotes that had appeared in the *National Republican Chart*, was a biography entitled, "The People's Candidate/General Saml Houston." Under the eye-catching headline, "Next President!!!", Lloyd advertised the chart in July, 1860 as "Another great chart for Agents . . . beautifully colored, on the best paper." The cost was 25-cents.

In yet another revision, it should be noted, Lloyd issued *The National Political Chart* (fig. 12) after Lincoln's election victory and the outbreak of the rebellion. A bearded Lincoln was now shown surrounded not by political foes, but by political and military allies: members of his cabinet and military figures such as General Winfield Scott.²⁶

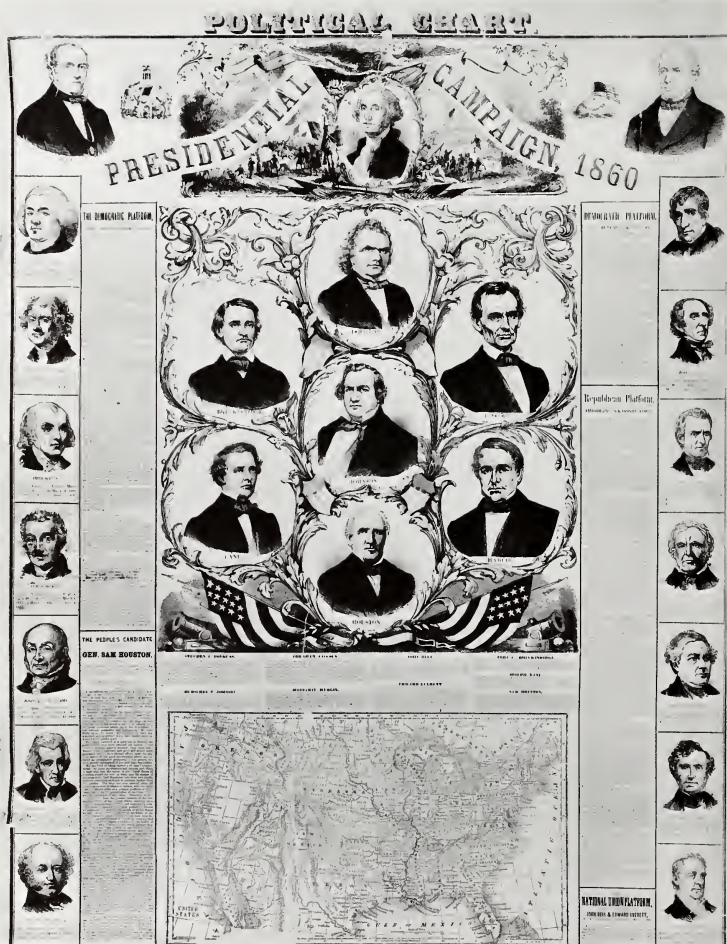


FIGURE 11. H. H. Lloyd, *Political Chart. / Presidential Campaign, 1860*, New York (1860). Colored wood-engraved broadside with type. (Sotheby Parke Bernet)

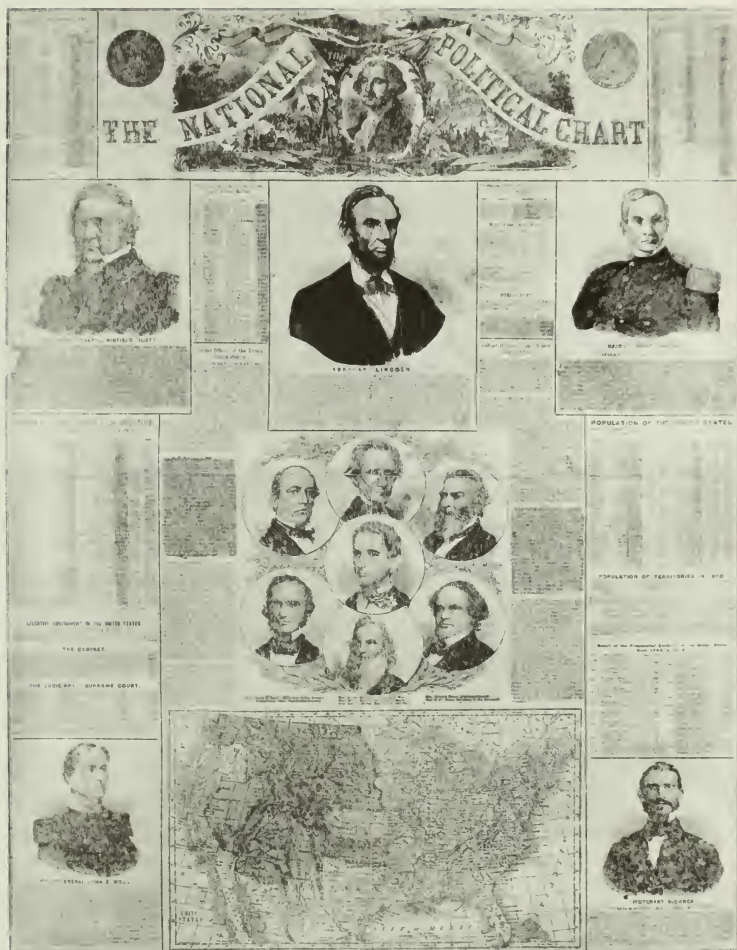


FIGURE 12. H. H. Lloyd, *The National Political Chart*, New York (1861). Colored wood-engraved broadside with type. (Illinois State Historical Library)

* * *

Lloyd later advertised himself as the maker of the “greatest” engravings in New York. Surely that was an overstatement. One of Lloyd’s New York rivals, however, could have convincingly made such a claim. He was Alexander Hay Ritchie, the Scottish-born steel-plate engraver whose works included the best-selling adaptation of Carpenter’s painting of the Emancipation Proclamation. In 1860, Ritchie had tried to convince Lincoln that the country’s plentiful supply of campaign lithographs needed to be augmented by pictures for more refined tastes—specifically, the kind of engravings Ritchie produced. In a letter to Lincoln on June 28, 1860, Ritchie wrote from New York:

We notice that the likeness made by Mr. Hicks and that by Mr. Barry are both to be reproduced on stone in the *lithographic* form. You are undoubtedly aware that a *steel plate engraving* is very much better & more desirable than a lithograph—By the first named process, is secured not only a higher degree of finish, & greater vigor & character, but much better artistic effect— . . . If entirely agreeable to you, we should be glad of the privilege and opportunity to engrave your likeness on steel—with a view to publication of the same.²⁷

Inexplicably, unlike those practitioners of the less “desirable” lithograph process, Bufford and Brainard, Ritchie seemed unwilling to send an artist to Springfield to capture an original likeness to serve as a model for his proposed engraving. Conceivably, he realized that such a complicated, time-consuming procedure would cost him far more weeks than he could afford. The demand for campaign portraits was strong, he knew, and engravings took longer to produce than lithographs, without the added complication of commissioning painters. Ritchie suggested a photographic model instead.

“We would use Brady’s Photographic likeness,” he wrote Lincoln, probably referring to the familiar 1860 Cooper Institute pose, “were it not that it has been already extensively copied & caricatured & we wish something different.” Could Lincoln not “get an Ambrotype or Daguerreotype taken by one of the best operators as near you as may be convenient,” Ritchie wondered. Offering as reference publisher D. Appleton and C. A. Dana of the New York *Tribune*, Ritchie & Co. assured Lincoln “that no improper use will be made of the likeness you may have sent to us.”²⁸

There is no record that Lincoln ever provided the photographic model that Ritchie requested, or that he even bothered to reply to the engraver’s letter. Apparently with nowhere else to turn, Ritchie went ahead and engraved a

Lincoln campaign print based on the very photographic model he had told Lincoln he wanted to avoid: Mathew Brady's Cooper Institute photograph. Although we have yet to unearth a surviving copy of the print, we do know that it existed, because Lincoln's private secretary, John M. Hay, later wrote that he believed "Ritchie's reproduction of Brady's photograph the Cooper one, the best thus far."²⁹

* * *

The most common criticism levelled at *The Lincoln Image* was that it failed to include more anti-Lincoln print portraiture. In the words of one reviewer: "By failing to give due billing to the graphic art that mirrored the vitriolic anti-Lincoln prejudices of so much of our citizenry during his presidency, *The Lincoln Image* falls short of presenting a truly balanced study of the living Lincoln in the popular mind."³⁰

In that sense, the book would have benefitted from the use of more anti-Lincoln graphic art. However, *The Lincoln Image* dealt principally with those portraits and genre groups that, as heirs to the sacred picture, earned display in American parlors. Sheet music, also included in our book, also found its place in the home. Our research into the uses of caricature in the nineteenth-century has failed to produce any evidence to suggest that print patrons manifested antagonism toward Lincoln by displaying anti-Lincoln lithographed cartoons in the same way they displayed political portraits. According to Stephen Hess and Milton Kaplan in their study, *Political Cartoons*, such lampoons "probably were sold to party headquarters at bulk rates, although they could also be purchased individually at prices ranging from five to twenty-five cents."³¹ It is conceivable that some individual customers did buy these caricature prints—although it remains mystifying to us to imagine what any purchaser might do at home with the 1864 cartoon *The Commander-in-Chief Conciliates the Soldiers' Vote on the Battlefield* (fig. 13). Yet Hess & Kaplan maintain that another print, by Currier & Ives, *The Irrepressible Conflict* (fig. 14), was published in an edition of 50,000. Someone must have purchased them.

With cartoons distributed principally through party newspapers and political organizations and with most examples so immediate and ephemeral in terms of their content, it is doubtful they were retained for more than a few weeks or months by any but the most avid partisans and souvenir hunters. There is yet no proof to suggest a use for them in the home alongside the political print portrait.

We would like to be able to measure and compare the relative intensities of feeling that motivated different types of print purchases: portraits of presidential

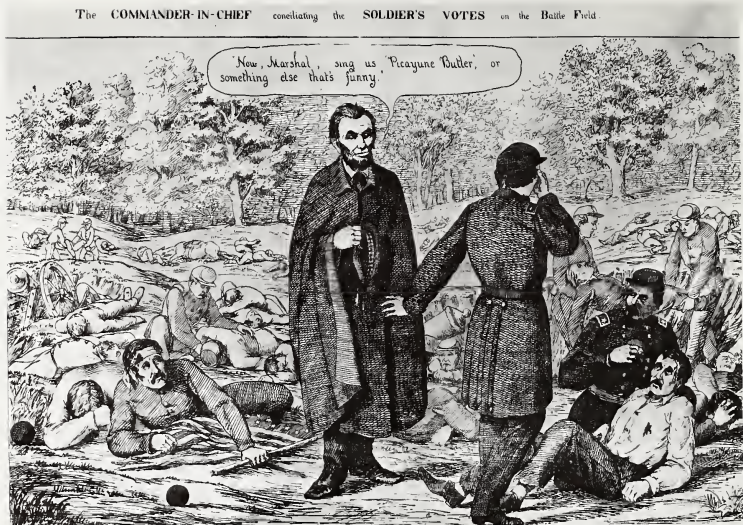


FIGURE 13. [Printmaker unknown], *The Commander-In-Chief conciliating the Soldier's Votes on the Battle Field* (1864). Lithograph. (Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum)



FIGURE 14. Currier & Ives, *The Irrepressible Conflict. / Or the Republican Barge in Danger*, New York (1860). Lithograph. (Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum)

candidates, portraits of presidents, and political cartoons (or “anti-portraits,” as they might be called). But the current state of the study of prints will not allow this. Like much of intellectual history, as James Gilreath points out in “American Book Distribution,” most studies, and *The Lincoln Image* is no exception in this regard, have focused on relationships between artist and publisher or on printing technologies. We know almost nothing about the marketing and distribution of prints.



PRINTED BY CURRIER & IVES

115 NASSAU ST. NEW YORK

FREEDOM TO THE SLAVES.

Proclaimed January 1st 1863, by ABRAHAM LINCOLN, President of the United States.
 "PROCLAIM LIBERTY THROUGHOUT ALL THE LAND UNTO ALL THE INHABITANTS THEREOF" Lev XXV 10.

FIGURE 15. Currier & Ives, *Freedom to the Slaves.* / Proclaimed January 1st. 1863, by Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States. / "Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof."—*Lev. XXV, 10*, New York (c. 1865). Lithograph. (Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum)

Iconology and Iconography: The Emblems of Heroism

THE LINCOLN IMAGE, in suggesting a new way of interpreting political prints—in fact, a new way of explaining their very existence—naturally short-changed more traditional ways of interpreting pictures. One such way is to examine their indebtedness to artistic and symbolic influences: the discipline of iconology. Of course, it should be clear that few creators and fewer purchasers of Civil War era prints possessed the classical learning to comprehend even a smattering of their iconological implications. Nor does iconology apply neatly to the Lincoln image because so many Lincoln prints were derivative or outright copies. Iconological insights must be applied with care to Lincoln prints—but they should be applied.

The symbols and emblems of power accrued progressively to Lincoln in prints, as he grew from candidate, to president-elect, to wartime leader, to emancipator, and to much-mourned martyr. Simple adjustments in accessories could subtly connote elevation in stature. When E. B. and E. C. Kellogg, for instance, issued one of their 1860 campaign prints of Lincoln (pl. 7), they placed him in an elaborate and formal, yet otherwise unremarkable chair. By the time they were ready to add a beard to the portrayal to update it after the election (pl. 8), they also redesigned the seal at the crest of the seat on which Lincoln was still depicted. Now the crest was transformed into a shield in the shape and style of America's flag. The candidate's chair had become, symbolically, the chair of state, a classical emblem of power and authority.

As enticing as it is to search for such emblems in Lincoln prints, however, one must always be aware that, no matter how provocative, certain symbolic efforts owed more to piracy than to originality.

* * *

We published Currier & Ives' *Freedom to the Slaves* (fig. 15) in *The Lincoln Image*, fully realizing that it was different from most efforts by that firm, quite unlike, for

example, the lithographers' other Emancipation effort, a direct, parlor-bound scene of Lincoln and Secretary of State Seward affixing their names to the document. *Freedom to the Slaves*, on the other hand, included rich symbolism: broken shackles, an emancipated slave in tatters, a family grouping to provide reassurance of all kinds, a smoking chimney in the distance connoting the security of the domestic hearth, and an uplifted presidential arm, suggesting both forcefulness and determination, and perhaps, too, Lincoln's frequently paraphrased urging that freedmen thank only God, not him, for their liberation. Since the book's appearance, our delight at finding and making use of such a rich pictorial document has been tempered somewhat by the realization that it was probably stolen from another printmaker.

It was later that we learned of the existence of a nearly identical effort by J. Waeschle, *Emancipation of the Slaves. / Proclaimed on the 22d of September 1862 by Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States of North America* (fig. 16). The Currier & Ives subtitle, on the other hand, referred to the final proclamation, declared *January 1st, 1863, by Abraham Lincoln*. . . . That evidence alone seemed to suggest that the Waeschle print had been inspired by the preliminary proclamation, and the Currier & Ives version pirated and adapted after the issuance of the final proclamation, perhaps after Lincoln's assassination. Neither print was officially dated.

To make matters more perplexing, however, the portraits of Lincoln used in each were based on photographs made in 1864, after both proclamations were history. The copyright files of the Library of Congress yielded no explanations either. Neither print, it turned out, had been registered there, though each included caption information that asserted that they had.

There is also a larger question to consider: not only who originated the design, but what inspired it? What was the message in this scene of a black ex-slave kneeling at Lincoln's feet to express his thanks for his freedom? As David Brion Davis noted in his recent Fortenbaugh Lecture, *The Emancipation Moment*, such "emancipation rituals . . . moments of transfiguration," were popular motifs designed by whites, and stood in sharp contrast to the white man's political approach to emancipation, which leaned toward "gradual, non-disruptive change," not high drama.³²

"The idealization of the emancipation moment," wrote Davis, "was most revealingly portrayed in numerous prints and paintings depicting joyous, half-clad blacks holding up broken manacles and kneeling in gratitude to well-dressed whites." It was a genre personified, according to Davis, by the 1805 David D'Angers bronze relief, *L'Afrique* (fig. 17), showing a group of grateful

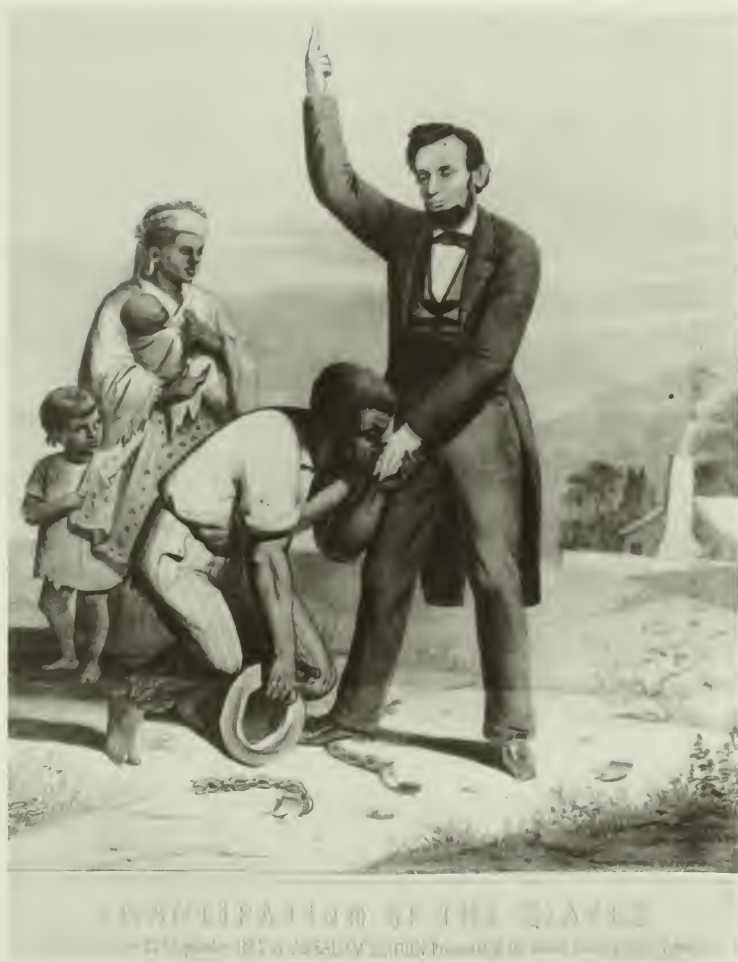


FIGURE 16. J. Waeschle, *Emancipation of the Slaves*, / Proclaimed on the 22d of September 1862, by Abraham Lincoln, President of the United States of North America, Chicago. Lithograph. (Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum)



FIGURE 17. Pierre Jean David d'Angers, *L'Afrique*, Strasbourg, France (1840). Bas-relief, bronze. (Photograph courtesy of Ville de Strasbourg, *Conservation des Musées, Chateau des Rohan*)

blacks offering thanks to their former masters, all of the freedmen displaying looks of “impassioned gratitude.” Davis perceptively argued that contrary to what these portrayals suggested, abolitionists were seldom personally on the scene to witness emancipation, freedmen seldom knelt, and Lincoln’s proclamation had not been written “to stir the hearts of assembled freedmen.” Nonetheless, he said, such ritual art was “designed to emphasize the indebtedness and moral obligations of the emancipated slaves as well as their dependence on the culture and expectations of their liberators.”³³

Thus, whomever we credit with *Freedom to the Slaves*, Waeschle or Currier & Ives, it is clear that it was designed for precisely that purpose: to celebrate an act of generosity by whites, to elicit a response of indebtedness by blacks, and, perhaps most important of all, to suggest to whites that they *had*, in fact, been generous, generous enough to expect, perhaps even demand, social subservience from the freedmen—the perpetuation of the symbolic bended knee with which Waeschle’s freed slave greeted Lincoln.

The “Emancipation Moment” theme was also vividly used in several prints included in *The Lincoln Image*. Gilman R. Russell’s *Emancipation Proclamation* (fig. 18), with its blend of lithography and calligraphy, was one case in point, portraying at its decorative apex a naked, crouched black man so dehumanized he is

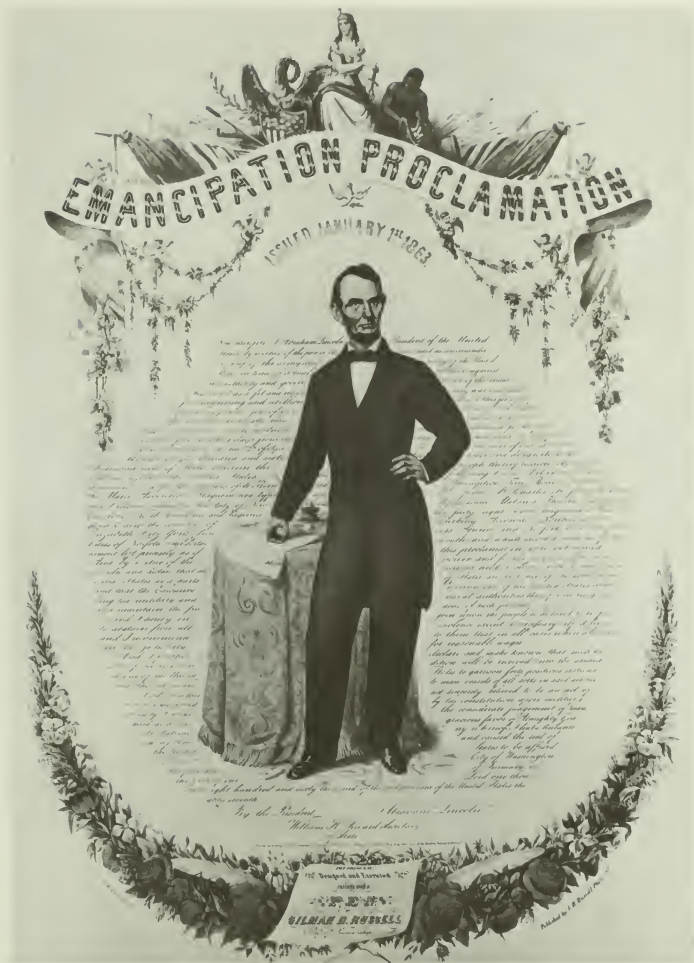


FIGURE 18. P[eter]. S. Duval & Son, *Emancipation Proclamation / Issued January 1st, 1863*, published by Gilman R. Russell, Philadelphia (1865). Colored lithograph. (Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum)

relegated to the position of rigid symbol, alongside Columbia and the American eagle.

In yet another calligraphic print, P. S. Duval's *Emancipation Proclamations*, accessory border portraiture conveys the progressive rise of the black man—but not too high. Before emancipation, he is shown bound to a tree stump, suffering a whipping. Later, he is seen rising, but only to his knees, to receive the news of the “Emancipation Moment” from Columbia herself. In this scene, labeled “1863,” the slave is transformed into a soldier, an obvious suggestion that preserving emancipation would require active fighting, and the shedding of blood on the part of the freedmen—a political reality that was somewhat more truthful than the mere beneficence typical of most depictions of the “Emancipation Moment.”

Yet some print portraiture, like some of the American public, went beyond the “normal” depiction of the Emancipation Moment. J. L. Magee's 1865 lithograph *Emancipation* (fig. 19), showed Lincoln treading on both the Christian symbol of evil, the serpent, and the classical symbol of bondage, the chain and shackle, raising a powerful right hand toward the print's subtitle, bathed in a sunlight emerging from the clouds of war: “Freedom For All, Both Black and White.” Below, the print features two groups of equally humbled people on their knees, raising outstretched arms to their saviour: a slave family, at right, and a poor white family, at left. Behind them are not only reminders of the horrors of slavery, but also the symbolic promise of deliverance, a public school above which flies a banner inscribed, “Education to All Classes.” What is most remarkable about this print, of course, is its unprecedented, almost radical universality: this Lincoln is emancipating not only slaves but the starving whites of the ravaged south—something Lincoln himself hoped emancipation would accomplish. Its message was of equal opportunity, equal access to self-improvement. It is unique in the archives of Lincoln print portraiture.

The January 1, 1863 proclamation was the most explosive act of Lincoln's presidency. For some, emancipation prints celebrated the act and called for further advancement. For others, the prints may have helped temper the affects of the blast.

Both the J. L. Magee and the Waeschle/Currier & Ives prints portrayed Lincoln as the Great Liberator, extending his right arm high over his head in an imagined, on-the-spot declaration of freedom. The gesture harks back to classical imagery that had all but vanished from popular art in the 1860s.

The right hand held aloft traditionally indicated power, privilege, and masculinity. In classical art, it was the hand that held staffs and scepters, the hand used to bestow gifts and administer the law. Whether Waeschle and Magee

And, by virtue of the power and for the purpose aforesaid, I do order and declare that all persons held as SLAVES, within designated States and parts of States aforesaid, and henceforward SHALL BE FREE



EMANCIPATION.

J. L. MAGEE, PUBLISHER, 305 WALNUT ST. PHILA.

FIGURE 19. J. L. Magee, *Emancipation*, Philadelphia (1865). Lithograph. (Stern Collection, Library of Congress)

knew it or not, the right hand was the correct hand to be shown held aloft in their Emancipation prints.³⁴ For most Americans, however, Lincoln's arm seemed to be pointing to God.

Another common classical artistic device, occasionally evident in Lincoln prints, was the classical column, symbolizing the republican state. The column was the derivative of the classical fasces, the symbolic column of rods bound together by disciplinary straps, from which protruded the blade of an axe—the traditional symbol of authority and unity. Not only is the symbolic column apparent in several Lincoln prints, so is the fasces.

The fasces can be perceived, for example, in the title letters of Gilman Russell's previously discussed calligraphic tribute to Emancipation, in which each character of the words, *Emancipation Proclamation*, were so wrapped—admittedly rather subtly—to resemble the ancient symbol of power. As far back as the 1860 campaign, the fasces had been used in a Lincoln print. This rare Baker & Godwin poster, *Abraham Lincoln / Republican Candidate for President of the*



FIGURE 20. Baker & Godwin, *Abraham Lincoln, / Republican Candidate for President of the United States*, New York (1860). Woodcut engraving. (Library of Congress)

United States (fig. 20), included the symbol. According to manuscript copyright records, it was one of the very first Lincoln campaign prints, registered May 29, 1860.³⁵ Actually a substantially neoclassical work, the print presented an adaptation of the primitive-looking Alexander Hesler tousle-haired photograph of Lincoln flanked rather incongruously by the classic forms of the goddesses of Justice and Liberty. Visible below is the fasces, with its protruding axe blade now taking on an unintentionally humorous new meaning for the railsplitter candidate for whom such blades were, after all, second nature.

Another classically adorned work was Edward Dalton Marchant's interpretation of emancipation (pl. 9). Francis B. Carpenter's more famous interpretation, painted around the same time, portrayed Lincoln as a patient, indeed almost passive administrator, inviting the viewpoints of his advisors in council, much like the image Lincoln himself wanted to project: the antithesis of the on-the-spot Lincoln of the "Emancipation Moment" prints.³⁶

In an engraved adaptation, John Sartain elicited at least one concession to realism, with or without artist Marchant's permission. In his adaptation, the document Lincoln holds is clearly marked: "Abraham Lincoln / January 1st, 1863 / Wm. H. Seward." In the painting, the sheath of paper is covered with indecipherable brushstrokes; for all intents and purposes, it is blank. However narrow its appeal, the Sartain print was issued in at least two editions, large and small folio, and reissued at least three times more, once in an authorized vignette lithograph by L. Haug of Philadelphia, copyrighted by Marchant himself May 18, 1865 (fig. 21), and then in successively degenerating piracies (figs. 22, 23) of the Sartain print that are as flat and crass as Sartain's is vivid and elegant.

Another classical symbol, seized by American printmakers, was that of the hand on hip. According to the emblem books it was the pose of patriotism (fig. 24). The iconological underpinnings of this pose—along with the printmaker's incurable tendency to copy outdated designs and steal each other's works—help account for the existence of several Lincoln images portraying him affecting this gesture.

Gilman R. Russell's *Emancipation Proclamation*, with the portrait of Lincoln lithographed by P. S. Duval, depicted the president in the pose of patriotism against the backdrop of a calligraphically inscribed Emancipation text. Actually, the pose had been used previously for an 1860 campaign print, that, in turn, had been copied from a print at least four years older portraying not Lincoln but John C. Frémont. Therefore, appropriate as it was in the Duval/Russell print, the pose of patriotism may well have been employed by chance.

The genesis of the print provides another useful reminder of the business

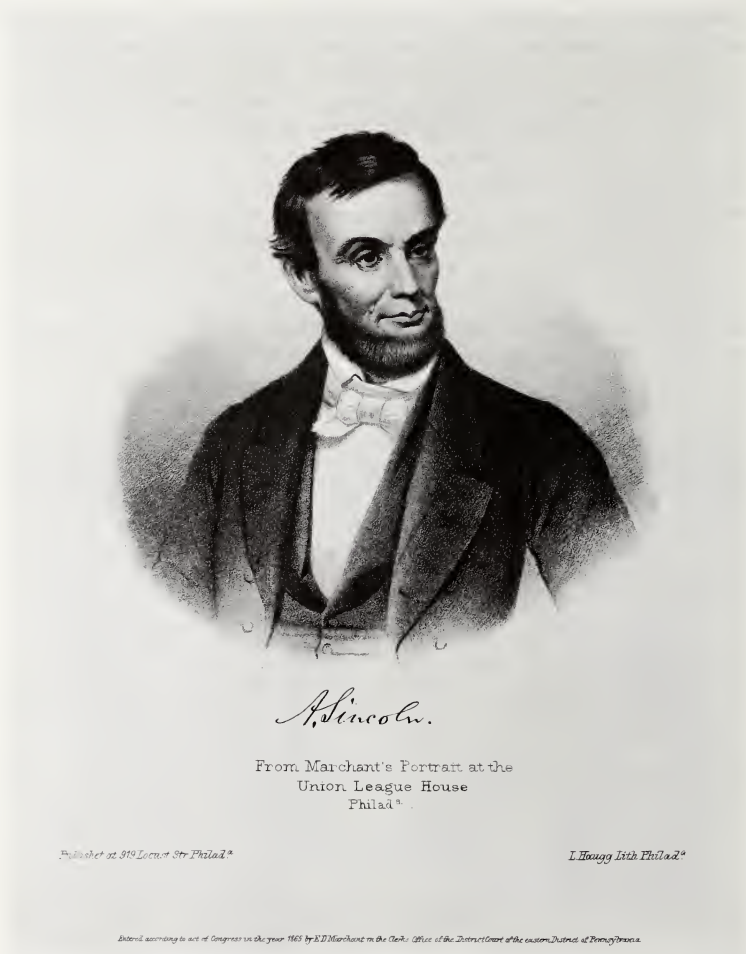


FIGURE 21. L. Haugg after a painting by Edward Dalton Marchant, *A. Lincoln*. [facsimile signature], Philadelphia (1865). Lithograph. (Stern Collection, Library of Congress)



FIGURE 22. John Sartain, after a painting by Edward Dalton Marchant, *Abraham Lincoln, / President of the United States* [with facsimile signature: Abraham Lincoln.], published by Bradley & Co., Philadelphia (1864). Lithograph. (*Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum*)



FIGURE 23. [Printmaker unknown], [Abraham Lincoln]. Lithograph. (Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum)

forces that drove print production in the 1860s. The Frémont engraving, probably issued in 1856 (fig. 25), had been updated in 1860 when the printmaker burnished out the face of the Pathfinder and inserted that of the Railsplitter (fig. 26). In so doing, he saved an expensive steel plate and provided a “new” engraving of a newly marketable public figure. Then, in 1865, during another period of high demand for Lincoln images, the print was dusted off again and again revised, this time with the addition of a beard (fig. 27). Not surprisingly, it was quickly pirated in this new form (fig. 28). A fourth state appeared around the same time, with Lincoln, hand still firmly on hip, now paired with a Lansdowne-style Gilbert Stuart painting of George Washington (fig. 29), probably pirated from James Heath’s 1800 engraving. Thus the Lincoln-on-Frémont, with the addition of the Washington, became an “original” print of “The Founder and Preserver of the Union” (fig. 30).

The engravers of the eighteenth century understood what iconographer Wendy Wick Reaves calls “the allegorical vocabulary.” Their learning was part of the heritage of their trade and was elucidated for a larger public in such works as George Richardson’s *Iconology* (London, 1779). In the more democratic world of the nineteenth century, classical learning declined rapidly, even as appreciation and demand for prints grew.



FIGURE 24. [Printmaker unknown]. *Patrimism*, from George Richardson’s book *Iconology*, (1779). Engraving. (Courtesy Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum Library)



FIGURE 25. J[ohn]. C[hester]. Buttre, *John Charles Fremont*, New York (1859). Mezzotint engraving. (*Library of Congress*)



FIGURE 26. J[ohn]. C[hester]. Buttre, *Abraham Lincoln*, New York (1860). Mezzotint engraving. (Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum)



FIGURE 27. J[ohn]. C[hester]. Buttre, Abraham Lincoln, New York (c. 1865). Mezzotint engraving. (*Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum*)



ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

Photographed by S. W. Sawyer, Bangor, Me.

Inaugurated as President March 4, 1861.
Inaugurated for his 2d term, March 4, 1865.
Assassinated April 14, 1865.

FIGURE 28. S. W. Sawyer, *Abraham Lincoln*, Bangor, Maine (c. 1865). Photograph of an engraving. (John Hay Library, Brown University)



FIGURE 29. James Heath, after a painting by Marquis, *General Washington*, printed by Gabriel Stuart (1797). Oil on canvas. (*White House Collection*)



FIGURE 30. [Photographer unknown], *The Founder and Preserver of the Union*, (c. 1865). Photograph of a lithograph. (Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum)

As art historian Erwin Panofsky notes, these “symbolic values” were sometimes “unknown to the artist himself and may even emphatically differ from what he commonly intended to express.” Besides, as *The Lincoln Image* pointed out, “it did not matter that much whether the symbolism was wrong for a Lincoln print.” Americans “no longer knew.”³⁷

It is probably helpful to remember the lesson in the story of Jonathan Trumbull, the great American painter of the century before Lincoln, who reportedly once told his father how very much he wished that American audiences would appreciate art as passionately and with as much sophistication as the patrons in the “glorious days of Greece and Rome.” To which his father replied dryly: “You forget, sir, that Connecticut is not Athens.”³⁸

* * *

After the propriety of posing Lincoln with rail fences and flatboats had passed, it is safe to say that in all print portraiture, the only comparably acceptable symbol consistently associated with Lincoln was George Washington ushering him into their exalted, shared corner of historical heaven. In the many prints of the two leaders standing side by side, or floating amidst billowy clouds in an afterworld presumably reserved for American heroes, came the clearly implied and apparently widely accepted signal that after sixteen presidents, three wars, and some seventy-five years of history, America had finally endured a crisis that had produced a leader as heroic as Washington.

It was this symbolic association, and the manner in which it was given visual resonance by the printmakers, that provided the pictorial peroration for both the exhibition and the book, *The Lincoln Image*. It therefore seems also the logical place to offer the coda to *Changing the Lincoln Image*.

The subject of Washington iconography has been substantially enriched by the recent appearance of Gary Wills’ *Cincinnatus: George Washington and the Enlightenment*. The work prompts a reassessment of Lincoln’s image here vis-a-vis that of George Washington.

Wills acknowledges, as did we in our book, that as leaders and as subjects for prints, Lincoln and Washington had much in common. Both dealt with national rebellions. One helped enact the first Declaration of Independence, the other, the so-called “second Declaration of Independence,” the Emancipation Proclamation. Each was physically strong and taller than most men. Each was credited with legendary honesty. These common traits appealed to printmakers and implicitly manifested themselves in the portraits in which the two were depicted together, as equals. As their simplistic but evocative captions described them,

they were the founder and saviour of the republic. But there were also significant differences in the ways artists portrayed the Washington and Lincoln images. The most obvious is that, by and large, there was no tradition of anti-Washington portraiture in America. Washington was always beyond reproach, even to artists. But there were other, subtler differences as well.

Most early engravings of Washington, and the paintings upon which they were based, for example, did not portray Washington as a law giver, even though he was America's first such official. By the time he assumed the presidency, Wills believes, artists felt that Washington had already become too mythical a figure to be portrayed actively. Portraits more often depicted him as a "philosopher in his cabinet" than a political leader, a static figure of history even while he was still making it. Lincoln, of course, did not attain mythic stature until after his assassination and was therefore shown in many prints as a law giver, especially in the myriad of Emancipation portraits that variously showed him writing the document, signing it, and in the case of the "Emancipation Moment" prints discussed previously, in the imagined act of symbolically liberating actual slaves. Even after 1865 these prints continued to appear. Here was the first significant difference between the images of Washington and Lincoln: although both had been compared to the biblical law givers, only Lincoln was so portrayed in the graphic arts.³⁹

Another iconographical point of departure came in military imagery. Washington, the military giant, was often compared to Cincinnatus, the legendary Roman who left his plow to save his country in time of war and then unselfishly gave back power and returned to the land. In a sense, however, Washington always possessed a military image beneath the patina of his civilian paternalism. Not so with Lincoln. Yet although he was an unabashed civilian politician, Lincoln was nonetheless portrayed occasionally in military genre scenes such as *Council of War* and in portrait groups together with his military leaders. It seemed as if the case had to be made for Lincoln's military skill, where of course it did not with Washington's. It is particularly interesting to weigh one of the most unconvincing of Currier & Ives' Lincoln lithographs, a scene of the president in conference with his military advisors at City Point (fig. 31), with a beautiful artist's proof copy of a J. C. Buttre engraving of Lincoln at the Hampton Roads Peace Conference (fig. 32). The latter print, probably intended for inclusion in a book, was never circulated as a separate sheet popular print. Only a few weeks after it was drawn, Lincoln died, and the need to portray him as tough, resolute, even occasionally military, probably increased, making portrayals such as the Hampton Roads peacemaking scene unacceptable.



FIGURE 31. Currier & Ives, *President Lincoln at Genl. Grant's Headquarters. / At City Point, VA March, 1865*, New York (1865). Lithograph. (Illinois State Historical Library)

The printmakers' Lincoln was never as convincing a classical hero as he was a romantic ideal. He could be shown much more frequently in relaxing moments with his non-military family, in the many prints of the Lincolns at home. This image seemed to contradict the advice Benjamin Rush had offered public men during the Enlightenment: "Let him be taught to love his family, but let him be taught, at the same time, that he must forsake and even forget them when the welfare of his country requires it."⁴⁰

The irony was that, as president, it was Lincoln, more than Washington, who followed this principle, spending precious little time with his wife and children during his White House years. Perhaps that is why the pictorial affirmations that he had enjoyed such leisure were not popularized until after his assassination, when, more than ever before, the public seemed to need such assurances, however unsubstantiated by fact. As for Washington, the quintessential print of the first family, painted by Edward Savage and engraved by Savage and David Edwin (fig. 33), depicted him not at ease at home, but in uniform, not at leisure around the parlor table, but at work there, studying a



FIGURE 32. J[ohn]. C[hester]. Buttre, *Lincoln & Stephens in Hampton Roads*, New York (1865). Proof of an engraving. (McLellan Lincoln Collection, John Hay Library, Brown University)

map of the new federal capital that would bear his name. It was Washington whose image was shaped to fit the Enlightenment ideal that Rush had articulated. It was Lincoln—who, in reality, had pursued it as president—who was portrayed in bathetic parlor scenes that could not have occurred, but which Victorian audiences seemed to need to confirm the sacredness of home and family (fig. 34).

A final important difference between the images artists created for Washington and Lincoln involves religion and the disparate response to religion by the cultures that nurtured each leader. Wills explains that when Washington died, his image, once likened to several Biblical figures, including Moses, was quickly secularized, a positioning reinforced in writing by Parson Weems, whose biography stressed “virtue and civic duty” in an effort to trace Washington’s reputation to “human providence rather than divine inspiration.” According to Wills, “Cincinnatus was an icon meant by the Enlightenment to *replace* churchly saints with a resolutely secular ideal.” If politics had indeed become a civil religion, then it was appropriate for political icons to replace religious ones.



FIGURE 33. Edward Savage and David Edwin after a painting by Edward Savage, *The Washington Family*. / *La Famille de Washington*. / *George Washington his Lady, and her two Grandchildren by the name of Custis*. / *George Washington, Son Espouse, et Ses deux petits Enfants du Nom de Custis*, Philadelphia. Published by E[dward]. Savage & Rob[ert]. Wilkinson, London (1798). Engraving. (National Portrait Gallery)

But when Lincoln died, in the middle of the Victorian era, he was transformed by image-makers *into* a religious object: he was Moses, he was the “saviour,” he was a Christ figure who had died for his countrymen’s sins. Part of this development stems from the fact that Washington had lived first—had lived out the life of the American father so that Lincoln could emerge, in a sense, as his son. It had surely helped also that Lincoln had liberated a race and had been martyred on Good Friday. Whatever its sources or inspirations, Lincoln’s image underwent a transformation opposite from Washington’s. In many ways, then, their images were quite different.⁴¹

In a sense, it can be argued that the many prints that paired Lincoln with



FIGURE 34. [Edward] Herline & [Daniel] Hensel, *Abraham Lincoln & His Family*, published by Kelly & Sons, New York (c. 1865). Lithograph. (*Library of Congress*)

Washington were therefore somewhat incongruous, flattering and image-enhancing though they were for Lincoln. In terms of image, Lincoln may have more accurately been the heir not to Washington alone, but to all the founders who had been portrayed generations earlier in prints: Lincoln was Washington the warrior and nationalist; he was also Madison the law giver, Jefferson the articulator of Democratic ideals, and even Franklin, the “first” self-made man whose simplicity suggested pictorial metaphors such as kites and keys that achieved the same kind of ubiquitous visual impact as Lincoln’s axe, maul, and rail. In the end, however, print audiences seemed to favor the depictions of the first and sixteenth presidents together, on earth as in heaven. Their imagined meeting may have re-enforced for Americans the secure knowledge that the Union Washington had helped found was now safe forever. But in at least one of those images, there was artistic irony no printmaker could have anticipated.

In his study, Gary Wills argues that the John James Barralet engraving of

Washington ascending into heaven was “the only apotheosis of Washington that won popular favor,” a print that represented him “at the intersection of time and eternity.”⁴² *The Lincoln Image* focused on the second state of that print, one in which the Brady five-dollar bill head replaced its eighteenth-century equivalent, the Gilbert Stuart head of Washington on the same body, symbolically ushering in a new era of appreciation of Lincoln’s place in history.

The print was not only the paradigm of Lincoln-Washington pairings, we argued, but in its continued use of outdated and inappropriate symbols, presented another piece of evidence to confirm our contention that printmakers typically ignored such subtleties in their rush for competitive primacy in the Lincoln marketplace. Yet is also represented, we said, the symbolic emergence of Lincoln as the full equal of Washington, even in a metaphorical and allegorical world that his predecessor had shaped.

Indeed, most of the symbols in the print, including the warrior’s helmet, the masonic emblem, the badge of the Society of Cincinnati, the mourning Indian, and the American shield with its fifteen stars, are specifically tied to Washington, with only the universal symbols for Time, Faith, Hope, and Charity holding meaning for both centuries and both leaders—and to those few Americans still familiar with medieval symbols.

Finally, there was the almost transcendental presence of Columbia, the symbols of war resting at her feet, and carrying over her shoulder a pole hooded by a liberty cap. The same symbolic cap had been used in the Baker and Godwin campaign print in 1860, and on another 1860 print, the updating of the classic Compromise of 1850 print, *Union*, which was later redesigned to feature Lincoln where John C. Calhoun, incongruously enough, had been portrayed in the original: directly beneath the liberty pole and cap. What Smith and the other printmakers probably did not realize was that the cap was the classical symbol for the manumission of slaves. And while it hardly applied to Calhoun, or even to Washington, who agreed to free his own slaves only upon his wife’s death, it certainly did fit Lincoln, who had liberated more slaves than any man in history.

In one of those rare, iconographical coincidences, the use of the liberty cap in the apotheosis revision of 1865 (pl. 10) actually made far more sense than it had in the Barralet original (pl. 11) of Washington’s apotheosis sixty-three years earlier.

The obscure old emblems of classical art had come full circle to achieve inadvertently rich meaning in Lincoln iconography.

* * *

PROCLAMATION OF EMANCIPATION.

THE SECOND
DECLARATION



OF
INDEPENDENCE!

BY PRESIDENT LINCOLN.

JANUARY 1st, 1863.

In presenting to the public, the Liberty-loving people of the United States, this elegant historical memorial, we feel that no comment is needed upon its great and noble subject, the undying parchment that sealed to Fame the name of our beloved Martyr-President, that made Abraham Lincoln the great liberator of a race, that made 1863 a great era in the history of the Republic, and wiped away the great stain that for eighty years had darkened its glorious annals. It is undying and immortal, beloved and revered, and further comment is unnecessary.

A suitable copy or memento of this great document should be and will be in the house of every lover of his country. One finer or better adapted to the demands of the public than this, we hesitate not to say, has not yet been produced. In beauty of design, artistic finish, and yet within the means of all, it is unsurpassed.

SUN, LIBERTY, EAGLE, NATIONAL BANNERS.

GEORGE WASHINGTON,

Benjamin Franklin.	Thomas Jefferson.
Chief Justice Story.	John Quincy Adams.
John Wesley.	William Penn.
Lucretia Mott.	L. Maria Child.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN,

William H. Seward.	Horace Greely.
Salmon P. Chase.	Charles Sumner.
James H. Lane.	Cassius M. Clay.
John S. C. Abbott.	Wm. H. Burleigh.

JOHN C. FREMONT,

Wendell Phillips.	Owen Lovejoy.
Rev. Nathan Brown.	H. Ward Beecher.
Benjamin F. Butler.	Gerrit Smith.

Ten Vignettes,

Representing the Curse of Slavery and Blessings of Liberty.

Fury, Satan, Calhoun and Jeff Davis.
 Plantation Scene.
 Slave, Auction, Separation.
 Branding Slaves, C. S. on forehead, Barbarism.
 Goddess of Liberty, I'pas Tree, Slave, Hounds.
 Purity, Dove, Olive Branch.
 School.
 Happy Family, Restoration.
 Church, House, Plowing, Civilization.
 Justice, Man, Railroad, Steamboat, Ship.

The Proclamation is on fine plate paper, 20 by 26 inches, appropriately and beautifully colored, 32 portraits; in all over 120 figures, with descriptive pamphlets sent to any address by mail; postage paid on receipt of \$2.00.

The Greatest Novelty of the Age! The Proclamation of Emancipation Illustrated!!

Card Photograph containing 721 words, 10 vignettes, 38 Portraits, and over 124 figures, should adorn every loyal lady's Album. **Price 20 Cents.**

LITHOGRAPHED BY ROSENTHAL, AND PUBLISHED BY L. FRANKLIN SMITH,

No. 327 Walnut Street, P. O. Box 2423 Philadelphia, Pa.

FIGURE 35. L. Franklin Smith advertising poster, *Proclamation of Emancipation. / The Second / Declaration of / Independence! / By President Lincoln. January 1st, 1863*, Philadelphia (1865). Woodcut engraving with type. (Stem Collection, Library of Congress)

Sadly, there is scant evidence to indicate whether Lincoln himself ever enjoyed the opportunity to contemplate the emblematic print portraits produced during his lifetime. As a presidential candidate, he had proclaimed himself a "very indifferent judge" of his prints. As president, it is reasonable to assume, his interest only declined.

But we recently unearthed a rare advertising broadside, issued by Philadelphia print publisher L. Franklin Smith, that suggests that at least once as president, in 1865, Lincoln personally accepted a copy of what was billed as an illustrated "memento" of the Emancipation Proclamation (fig. 35 and cover). "The Greatest Novelty of the Age," Smith proclaimed the work, a copy of which, he said, "should be and will be in the house of every lover of his country. One finer and better adapted to the demands of the public than this, we hesitate not to say, has not yet been produced. In beauty of design, artistic finish, and yet within the means of all, it is unsurpassed."

According to this rare broadside, Smith personally gave Lincoln a copy of the print on March 6, 1865. Included in the flyer was a small lithograph depicting the actual presentation ceremony, with Lincoln shown studying the framed print with dignified interest as Smith explains his "elegant historical memorial."

It probably needed much explanation (pl. 12). Included among its "sun, liberty, eagle, national banners," and other arcane symbols, were thirty-two portraits (including Lincoln's), and 120 symbolic figures, including ten vignettes alternately representing "the curse of slavery and blessings of liberty." Fury, Satan, Calhoun, and Jefferson Davis constituted one such grouping; Purity, a dove and an olive branch constituted another. It was Emancipation neo-classicism run wild.

The work of German-born Philadelphia lithographer Max Rosenthal (who yearned to be taken seriously as a painter, not a printmaker), the twenty-inch by twenty-six inch, two-dollar print may well have been the only neo-Classical Emancipation print Lincoln ever saw. It was certainly the only print of any style he was ever portrayed accepting. The advertising print of Lincoln and Smith is the only known image of Lincoln together with a print portrait of himself.

What Lincoln thought about the Emancipation Proclamation was recorded by Carpenter: "It is the central act of my administration." What Lincoln thought of Rosenthal's cluttered design and classical allegory went unrecorded. Surely, however, he would not have gone as far as Smith's breathless advertising brochure, in which he declared, "it is undying and immortal, beloved and revered, and further comment is unnecessary."⁴³



PLATE 1. Portrait from life by Francis B. Carpenter, study for *First Reading of the Emancipation Proclamation of President Lincoln*, signed and dated: *From life by / F. B. Carpenter / 1864*. Oil on canvas. (Collection, Union League Club of New York; photograph by Don Perdue)



PLATE 2. American Bank Note Co., U.S. fractional currency fifty cent note, New York (1869).
(Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum)



PLATE 3. E[dmund]. B[urke]. and E[lijah]. C[hapman]. Kellogg, *Abraham Lincoln. / Andrew Johnson. / President and Vice-President*, Hartford, Connecticut, and New York City, New York (copublished by F. P. Whiting; late 1864 or early 1865). Lithograph. (Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum)

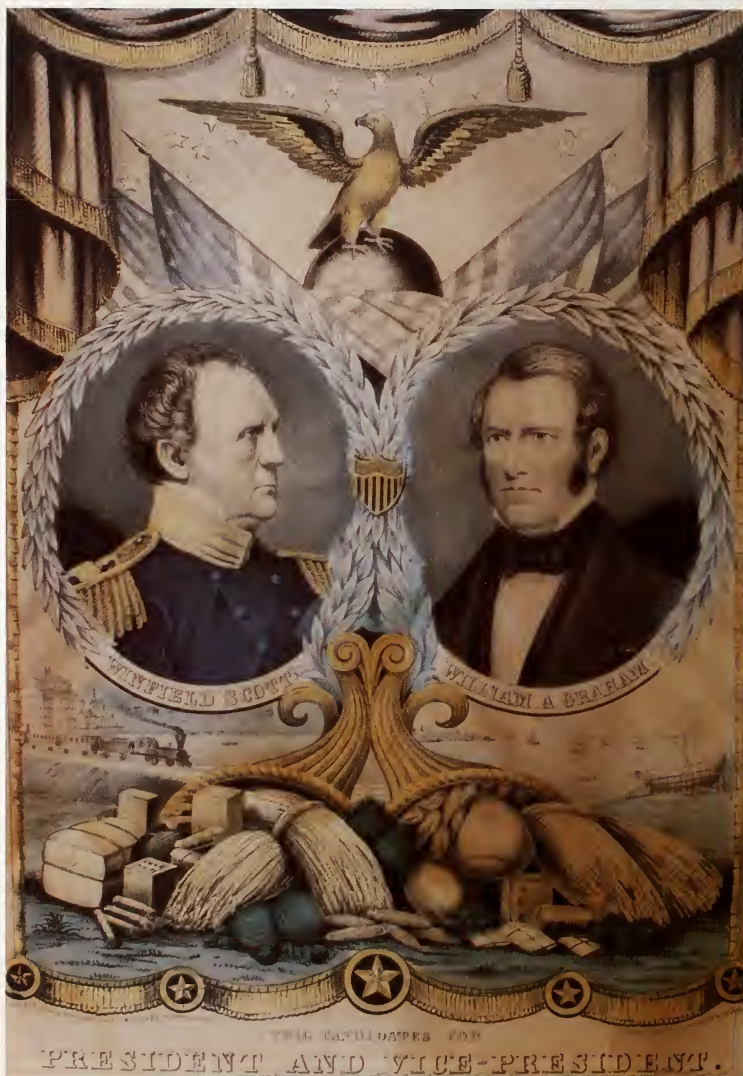


PLATE 4. E[dmond]. B[urke]. and E[lijah]. C[hapman]. Kellogg, *Whig Candidates for / President and Vice-President*, (1852). Lithograph. (Courtesy of Bradley R. Hoch, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania)



PLATE 5. F[ranklin]. H. Brown after E. Whitfield, *Lincoln As a Flatboatman on the Mississippi, Quincy in the Distance*, published by Rufus Blanchard, Chicago (1860). Woodcut engraving. (Brown University Library)

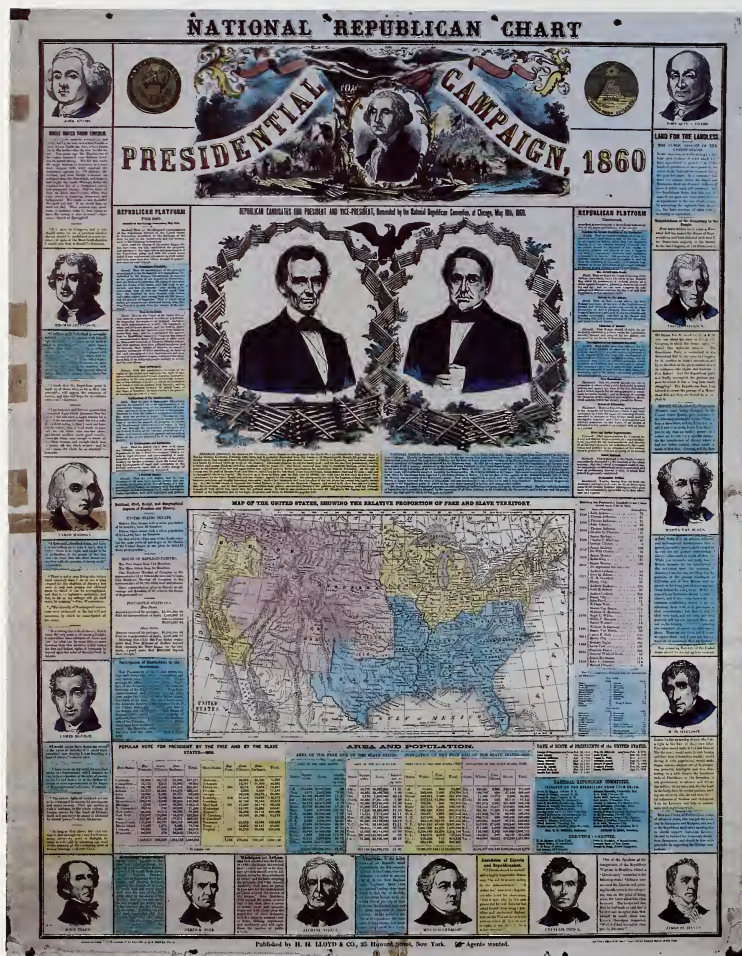


PLATE 6. H. H. Lloyd, *National Republican Chart / Presidential Campaign, 1860*, New York (1860). Colored wood-engraved broadside with type. (Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum)



PLATE 7. E[dmund]. B[urke]. and E[lijah]. C[hapman]. Kellogg, *Abraham Lincoln. / Republican Candidate for Sixteenth President of the United States*, Hartford, Connecticut (copublished by Geo[rge]. Whiting, New York) [1860]. Hand-colored lithograph. (Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum)



PLATE 8. E[dmund]. B[urke]. and E[lijah]. C[hapman]. Kellogg, *Abraham Lincoln, / Sixteenth President of the United States*, Hartford, Connecticut (copublished by Geo[rge]. Whiting, New York) [1861]. Hand-colored lithograph. (*Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum*)



PLATE 9. Portrait from life by Edward Dalton Marchant, Washington, D.C. signed and dated: *E. D. Marchant. / From Life. 1863.* Oil on canvas. (*The Art Collection of The Union League of Philadelphia*)



PLATE 10. D. T. Wiest, *In Memory of Abraham Lincoln—The Reward of the Just*, published by William Smith, Philadelphia (1865). Hand-colored lithograph. (Louis A. Warren Lincoln Library and Museum)



PLATE II. Painter unknown, after the 1802 engraving by J. J. Barralet, *The Apotheosis of Washington*, Made in China for export to U.S., early 19th Century. Reverse painting on glass. (Collection of the Museum of the American China Trade)



PLATE 12. Max Rosenthal, *Proclamation of Emancipation*, published by L. Franklin Smith, Philadelphia (1865). Hand-colored lithograph. (McLellan Lincoln Collection, John Hay Library, Brown University)

Notes

1. Harold G. and Oswald Garrison Villard, eds., *Lincoln on the Eve of '61: A Journalist's Story by Henry Villard* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1941), p. 92.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 92, 93.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 93.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 95.
5. Harold Holzer, Gabor S. Boritt, and Mark E. Neely, Jr., *The Lincoln Image: Abraham Lincoln and the Popular Print* (New York: Scribners, 1984), p. 123.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 124; P. J. Staudenraus, ed., *Mr. Lincoln's Washington: The Civil War Diaries of Noah Brooks* (South Brunswick, N.J.: Thomas Yoseloff, 1967), pp. 361, 363; Holzer, Boritt, and Neely, *The Lincoln Image*, p. 122.
7. Staudenraus, ed., *Mr. Lincoln's Washington*, p. 363.
8. Diaries of Francis Bicknell Carpenter, January 26, 1865; January 28, 1865; April 4, 1865; May 2, 1866; May 16, 1866; May 26, 1866; July 13, 1866, in the collection of Lawrence Carpenter Ives.
9. J. C. Derby, *Fifty Years Among Authors, Books, and Publishers* (New York: G. W. Carleton, 1884), p. 489.
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19. *Ibid.*, July 16, 1860, p. 2.
20. *New York Times*, August 23, 1860, p. 4; John G. Nicolay to Thomas M. Johnston, August 13, 1860, in Johnston Family Collection, Boston, Mass.; Diaries of Thomas M. Johnston, August 16, 1860, in Johnston Family Collection, Boston, Mass.
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22. We are grateful to Merl H. Moore, Jr., for calling our attention to the existence of the D'Avignon Lincoln-Hamlin poster and for alerting us to the existence of a number of important newspaper reviews.
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